



The

Fraternal

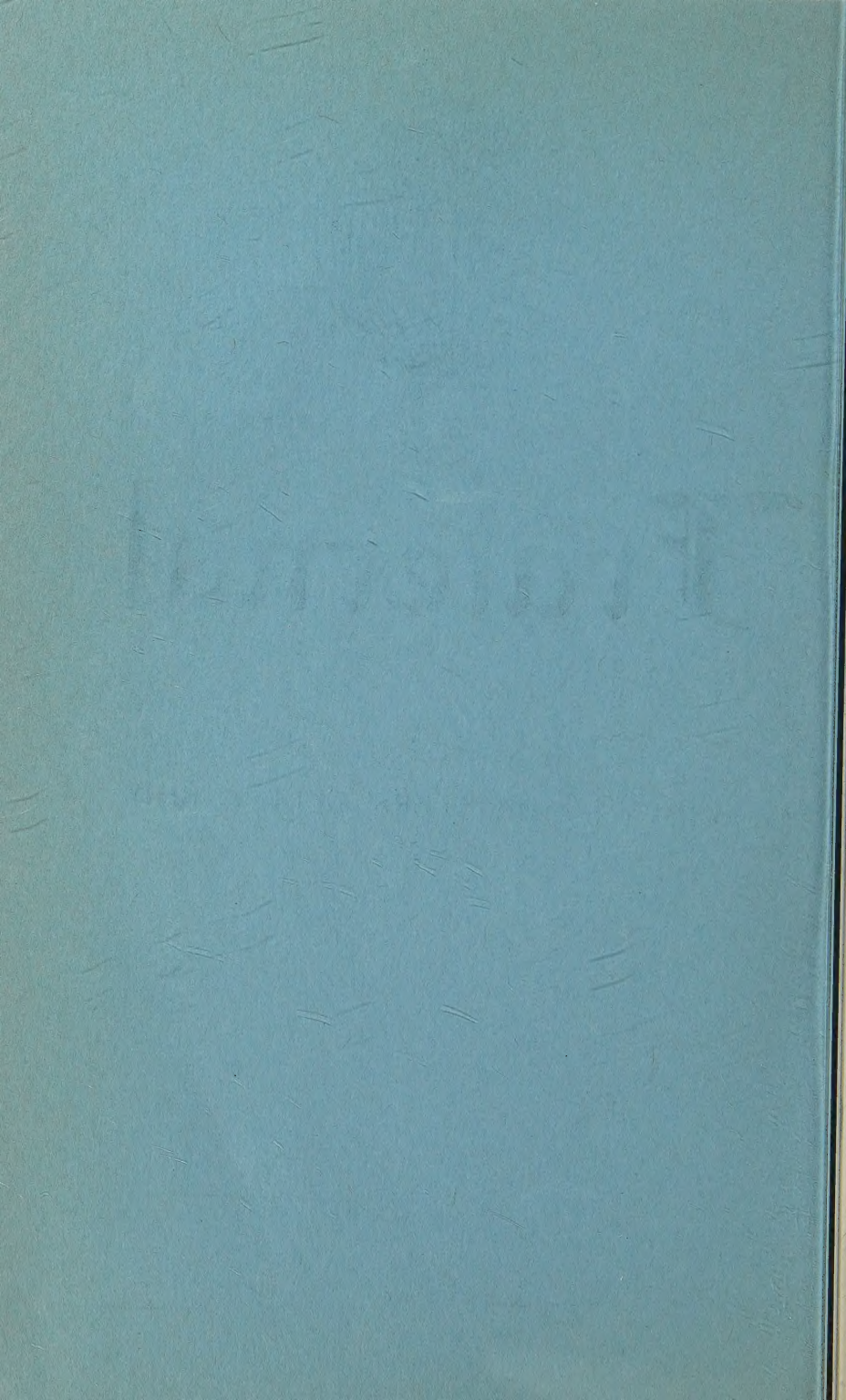
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No. 75

CENTENARY OF THE CONVERSION OF CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

HOME

By A CUNNINGHAM BURLEY, Baptist Minister (Retired).

HUMOUR

By J. R. EDWARDS, Moderator, Spurgeon's Tabernacle.

THE PREACHER

By J. W. EWING, M.A., D.D., Ex-President, Baptist Union.

THE MAN OF PRAYER

By GILBERT LAWS, D.D., Ex-President, Baptist Union.

THE PURITAN

By A. J. BARNARD, B.D., Minister of Acock's Green, Birmingham.

SPURGEON AND ATHENS

By G. J. M. PEARCE, M.A., Minister of Grange Road, Bradford.

THE MASTER THEME

By S. J. DEWHURST, B.D., Minister, Queen's Road, Wimbledon.

HERITAGE

By E. H. WORSTEAD, B.A., B.D., Tutor, Spurgeon's College.

THE THEOLOGIAN

By FRED CAWLEY, B.A., B.D., PH.D., Principal-Elect, Spurgeon's College.

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January, 1950

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EDITORIAL

“DINNA FORGET SPURGEON!”

IN view of the forthcoming celebration of the centenary of C. H. Spurgeon's conversion we welcome the opportunity of providing a Spurgeon number of *The Fraternal*. It will readily be granted that an adequate presentation of the long and varied ministry of this remarkable man cannot be made in the space at our disposal. The story can be told only in part—and a small part at that. We have been obliged to omit extended reference to the establishment of the college which, down the years, has afforded training for 1,500 men, for the home and foreign fields. (Let it be said that never has the College stood higher in general esteem than it does to-day.) Nor can we enlarge on the fact that over 100 churches, together with six local mission stations, and the Colportage Association, were brought into being, and were generously supported by this man of God.

As evidence of his concern for the unprivileged we can point to the Orphanage that bears his name, and to the Almshouses. The record of the printing and publishing and circulating of his sermons and commentaries and lectures, the *Sword and the Trowel*, the almanacs and pamphlets, fills us with astonishment—an output of 200 books. “It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

And what might be said of his ministry at the Tabernacle! That ministry continues to this day. Scarcely a Sunday passes that does not include in the congregation visitors from overseas. At a recent Sunday morning service there were present no fewer than fifty Americans, Canadians, Swedes and representatives of other lands, all of whom confessed their indebtedness to Spurgeon, and who, incidentally, were testifying to the abiding influence of his life and ministry in countries other than his own.

J. H. Jowett did not exaggerate when he said: “Spurgeon is not eclipsed even when set in the radiant succession of Calvin and Luther and Paul.”

Gladly, therefore, we devote this number of *The Fraternal* in grateful memory of a man who, as a lad of fifteen, a century ago, on a snowy morning, in a Methodist chapel, at the bidding of the preacher, looked to the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. “To Him,” Charles Haddon Spurgeon would say, “To Him, be all the glory!”

HOME

THE month of January was a remarkable time in the experience of Mr. Spurgeon. Though he was not born in that month, his spiritual new-birth took place in a Primitive Methodist chapel, on 6th January, 1850. This was followed, a few years later by his marriage, on 8th January, 1856; whilst his departure from his time-life and earthly ministry occurred on 31st January, 1892.

With appropriate fitness, the month of January, 1950, has been appointed by the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship to devote the New Year's number of *The Fraternal* magazine to the honoured memory of Mr. Spurgeon as preacher, theologian, mystic, etc. To me has been the pleasure of referring to his home-life, and, let me say, that all my knowledge of Mr. Spurgeon as a home-lover was gained by personal contact with his elder son, whose conversational exactness in this direction was admirable, and, therefore, memorable. My connection with Mr. Charles Spurgeon began in my college days when he was kind enough to form a friendship with me which lasted until his "home-going" many years later. That dear man told and taught me more about the home life with his parents and brother than anything which has appeared in the print of biographical writings.

It was generally known by his contemporaries that Mr. Spurgeon had two pleasant homes in London. The first was the "Helensburgh House" in Nightingale Lane, Clapham, where many happy years were spent. When that neighbourhood altered by the gradual approach of London, Mr. Spurgeon and his wife moved out to "Westwood," Upper Norwood. It was the privilege of the students in my day to visit that Beulah-like home and to enjoy the views of country scenery in the distance. As this was my experience on more than one occasion, I am thankful for the opportunity of setting a few of my pleasing recollections.

We are not invading the sanctities of domestic privacy when we remark that Mr. Spurgeon's home-life was ideal. No one could be an hour under his roof without perceiving the domestic affection that pervaded the entire house. Many sweet and tender stories might be told of his home-life. It was here that he shone with a radiance which even his publicity never knew. His heart went out freely to those who were privileged to cross the threshold into his house and home. The tenderness and intensity of his love for his afflicted wife were pathetic to witness and overhear, but sometimes when she was able to leave the house and walk with him under the shady trees, his delight was beautiful to behold. To his twin sons he was, in many ways, an ideal father, indulgent in all indifferent things but strict where any principle was involved.

It is not generally known that Dr. Robertson Nicoll went to live at Upper Norwood in the year 1886: "I have always preferred

this suburb: it is so high, with so much open country, and the air is the purest and most bracing in London. We are seven miles from the heart of the City and Mr. Spurgeon's house is quite near."

Then there was an *outdoor* aspect of Spurgeon's home-life which was a fascination to all who were favoured to meet him there. Although my college days did not begin until seven years after the President's death, there were many living then who well remembered Mr. Spurgeon at Norwood. With some of these I made friends and took care to preserve in my note-case anything that they told me which had been left unsaid by others.

Sometimes, after a committee meeting had been held indoors, the members went out and walked through the beautiful grounds only to return to the house. Then, usually, the Bible was read and expounded and Mr. Spurgeon, in the presence of his wife, would say, "We are part of the family of God; shall we draw near and talk to Him?" As they all turned to kneel, he moved towards the couch on which Mrs. Spurgeon was resting and poured out his soul in a passion of importunate prayer. A person who was present on one of these occasions said, "Never can we forget that hour. It was as if Heaven's gate had been opened and the smile of God had stayed at the room. Chastened, awed, ennobled, we rose and walked quietly to our homes." Highly favoured were the brethren who were honoured with this personal experience of Spurgeon's home-life. W. Williams, of Upton Chapel, has summarised his fellowship with Mr. Spurgeon by saying: "The gardens, grounds and conservatories were ever a charm to the mind and eye of all observers when the master of the house was with them to point out all the beautiful features of the trees and flower beds."

Several things surround us here in our house at Bournemouth to remind us of the home-life of my wife's grandfather at Norwood. Here we have the study-table on which he wrote and the chair on which he sat. Here, too, are his own volumes and manuscripts reposing in the "Westwood" book-cases. And there are many other items here that afford delightful glimpses of Spurgeon's happy home-life.

To those who may be reading this selection of souvenirs of such a distinguished personality as C. H. Spurgeon but who feel that of themselves they are of little consequence, let me conclude this paper by recalling an utterance by Dr. Parker, an outstanding contemporary:—

"We cannot all be equally conspicuous. Each cannot have his name written in history as having died. Some of us will be classed in dozens. Others of us will not even be known as families and households. We die as parts of a generation, lost in the crowd! What of it? The thing is not to leave a mere

name behind us. It is to leave behind influence that hearts will feel, and memories that will be cherished by those whom we have served and helped in life."

Of Mr. Spurgeon's home-life we can say:—

"O happy home, where those in heart united
In holy faith and blessed hope are one,
Whom death a little while alone divideth,
And cannot end the union here begun!"

A. CUNNINGHAM BURLEY.

HUMOUR

SPEAKING of a Dr. Dryasdust, Ian Maclaren's Elspeth says: "He has no more sense of humour than an owl. I hold that a man without humour should not be allowed into a pulpit. I hear that they have no examinations in humour at colleges. It's an awful want, for it would keep out many a dry body."

Elspeth would have rejoiced in Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a man after her own heart. By precept and example in the college he more than met the "awful want."

"My college lectures are colloquial, familiar and often humorous," he says; "they are purposely made so, to suit the occasion. At the end of the week I meet the students, and find them weary with stern studies, and I judge it best to be as lively and interesting in my prelections as I well can be."

Again: "Theology is dull reading to the unconverted; but mixed with a story, or set forth by a witty saying, they will drink in a great amount of religious truth and find no fault. They like their pills gilded, or at least sugar-coated, and if by that means they may be really benefited, who will grudge them the gilt or the sugar?"

To those who disapprove of humour in a preacher he says: "If you will be as dry as sawdust, as devoid of juice as the sole of an old shoe, and as correct as the multiplication table, you shall earn to yourself a high degree in the great university of Drone-ingen; but if you adopt a lively, forcible mode of utterance, all the great authorities of that gigantic institution will say: 'O, dear! it is a pity he is so eccentric.' Do you not think it very hard that some of us can never utter a playful sentence without being criticised?"

While he enjoyed and recommended wholesome humour, he had hard things to say of those who joke on sacred subjects. "Natural humour may possibly be consecrated, and made to wear the yoke of Christ, but he who apes it is no true man: the man who plays the fool with solemn truths is unworthy of his office."

To Spurgeon humour was God's merciful compensation for life's tragedy. "I have known seasons of suffering from neuralgia

or depression when my only hope of speaking was in taking off all the brakes, and allowing my mind to have full swing. The more my head has ached the more I have indulged in humour, or I should not have been able to speak at all."

It is true to say that the Governor, as he was affectionately called by his men, could not help being playful and humorous—no more help it than the lark can help its ecstasy, or the stream its sunny glance, or the waterfall its sparkling spray; no more help it than the lamb can help its gambols. Like the fragrance in the rose, like fire in the gem, it was there because God put it there.

One of Spurgeon's closest friends—my friend, too—James Douglas, in his tribute, "The Prince of Preachers," writes: "His greeting was as warm as sunshine. Speaking from experience, it mattered not what might be the shadow on the spirit or the trouble of heart, it all vanished away at the voice of his welcome. There was a light on his countenance that instantly dispersed all gloom. I have never known one whose presence was such a charm. At times he was as playful as a kitten, as merry as a lark. His was the laughing, gleeful eye; his love of fun stood in him to the end, and no seasoning of experience could tone it down one jot. He was a child of smiles and tears. His big heart readily overflowed: his humour was always within call at a moment's notice."

C.H.S. was often spoken of as the leading Puritan of his day. Those who imagine that puritanism stands for the heavy heart, the long face and the sepulchral tone, will need to revise their ideas of the puritans if this warm-hearted man is to be reckoned among their leaders. He held, as might be expected, that the mirth of a Christian can never be allowed to break the law of kindness. It must be

"The Christian wit, that inoffensive light,
That never grieves, but always aids the sight."

It would require a volume, and a big one, to tell all that might be told of Spurgeon's flashes of wit and sparks of humour. They are to be found in many, not in all, of his sermons; in his lectures; in his many books, especially in "John Ploughman's Talk," "John Ploughman's Pictures," and "The Salt Cellars"; in the records of conversations with friends; and in his wayside ministry. Here are a few samples:—

"Long prayers consist either of repetitions, or else of unnecessary explanations which God does not require; or else they degenerate into downright preachings, so that there is no difference between the praying and the preaching, except that in the one the minister has his eyes shut, and in the other he keeps them open."

"To divide a sermon well, may be a very useful art. But how if there is nothing to divide? A mere division maker is like an excellent carver with an empty dish before him."

"Adapt your preaching to your audience. Some men seem to throw a harpoon at a herring, and try to catch a whale with a sprat."

"Christ said, 'Feed My sheep!' . . . 'Feed My lambs!' Some preachers, however, put the food so high that neither lambs nor sheep can reach it. They seem to have read the text, 'Feed My giraffes!'"

"Here is a riddle for you. If Paul was the least of all saints, what size are you?"

"We ought to be careful in street-preaching not to annoy the residents. One man offered an open-air preacher to be converted—if only he would go."

Meeting a woman who usually bored him with her chatter, but who now had lost her voice, he said, with a merry twinkle: "My friend, with all your faults, I love you—*still*."

A friend of mine, named Sarah, collecting for a Jewish mission, invited him to contribute. He handed her some silver, adding: "It is right and proper that Sarah should care for Abraham's children."

In an address on "Ministerial Joys," given in Westwood to his students, he says: "Finally, what a joy it will be, by and by, to meet one another in Heaven. I think I shall know the apostle Paul as soon as I see him . . . I mean to look out for John Calvin, and John Knox, and John Bunyan. What a treat it will be to see the immortal dreamer in the Celestial City that he delighted to describe! I have promised to meet dear old Father Rogers up there, and to say to him: '*Now, friend Rogers, you were wrong about that infant sprinkling, after all, were you not?*'"

Mr. Spurgeon, himself possessed of a marvellous voice, and a delivery that was well-nigh perfect, brought his gaiety to bear on the student who failed to express himself clearly and persuasively. The following gave him an opportunity of displaying his remarkable powers of mimicry.

"I have heard many different varieties, from the fullness of the Johnsonian to the thinness of the little genteel whisper. . . . I have been able to trace some of our brethren to their ministerial forefathers, from whom they first of all gathered these, I must honestly add, detestable modes of speech. The undoubted order of their oratorical pedigree is as follows: Chip, which was the son of Lisp, which was the son of Simper, which was the son of Dandy, which was the son of Affectation. Or Wobbler, which was the son of Grandiose, which was the son of Pomposity: the same was the father of many sons."

His playfulness would be followed by sound teaching on the use of the voice. But even then he could not refrain from calling out a smile.

"It is all very well to 'Cry aloud, and spare not!' but 'Do thyself no harm!' is apostolic advice."

"Ink is necessary to write with, but if you upset the ink bottle over the sheet of paper, you convey no meaning thereby. So it is with sound. Sound is the ink, but management, not quantity, is needed, to produce an intelligible writing upon the ear."

The lecture on voice production concludes: "Take heart, young brother, persevere, and God and nature and practice will help you. I shall not detain you longer, but express the hope that your chest, lungs, windpipe, larynx, and all your vocal organs may last you till you have nothing more to say."

This paper might well conclude with J. H. Jowett's tribute. He declared that Spurgeon's greatness had four qualities. The tremendous gospel he preached, which was not only that man could be saved, but that he could be saved to the uttermost. The fact that he was so joyous—he always brought a song-bird into his sermon. Then there was his human touch and, finally, his humour. "So far as I can read Spurgeon, and I am always reading him, whenever he brought in humour, it was not a drawing-room lamp, lighting up a single room; it was always a street lamp, to show people the way home."

J. R. EDWARDS.

THE PREACHER

BY general consent Charles Haddon Spurgeon stands among the few supremely-great preachers of the Christian era.

In his power over great audiences and in the success of his spiritual appeal he has probably never been surpassed in the history of the pulpit. The secret of his popularity has often been discussed; it is surely found in no one thing, but rather in the combination in him of many elements of attractiveness and power.

The first thing noticed by everyone was his wonderful voice. I remember vividly the first time I heard him. I had just taken a post as assistant master in a South London school, and the first Sunday evening I was at liberty I walked to the Tabernacle. The building was packed, but I obtained a seat in the upper gallery at the furthest point from the platform. As I looked upon the crowd and heard the buzz of excitement, I wondered if I should be able to hear anything of the preacher, but at 6.30 he came in, and, after a moment of silent prayer, advanced with uplifted hand to the front of the rostrum. Instantly there was a deep hush in which Spurgeon's voice came up to me in my eyrie, clear and musical as a silver bell. I had no more anxiety about hearing him, and the service that followed was full of spiritual power.

Was he an orator? Yes, certainly. Imagination, memory and dramatic power enabled him to hold a great audience spell-bound. The people saw through his eyes the scenes he described and felt the emotions his theme aroused in his heart. Sometimes

as he spoke a burst of sunshine seemed to flood the Tabernacle; at other times the shadow of a deep solemnity accompanied the searching of many hearts. Perhaps the high water mark of eloquence was reached in the wonderful sermon on "Things that accompany salvation," preached when he was only twenty-three years old.

But Spurgeon's oratory was held in check by his spiritual purpose. His preaching was that of a great evangelist. His own judgment as to the secret of his success was that it resided in the Gospel he preached. "The Gospel," he said towards the close, "ever fresh and new has held my vast congregation together these many years."

And how sweet the Gospel was as he presented it! The message of salvation through Christ alone was ever his theme and it was spoken as from a heart that always felt its preciousness. And how he pleaded with men! One Sunday he preached on the text, "Compel them to come in," and so tender and urgent was his appeal that it was estimated that three hundred persons who joined the Church attributed their conversion to that sermon.

One lovely element in his preaching that drew the hearts of the people was his deep love for Jesus Christ. I have seen him with tears running down his cheeks when Mr. Chamberlain, the soloist, sang "Show me Thy face," a song which set forth the beauty of the Saviour. And when Spurgeon preached he so presented Christ that many hitherto careless listeners were arrested and the people of God were filled with joy.

But to the evangelistic was added the teaching note. Spurgeon dealt with great subjects, such as the Sovereignty of God, the Covenant of Grace and Redemption through the Blood of Christ. I remember that Sir W. Robertson Nicoll remarked when Spurgeon died how great a doctor of theology we had had in him. No doubt this characteristic grew with his maturing ministry. As years passed, he gave himself more and more to the building up of his great church in the faith. The exuberance of the early ministry passed into the quieter and deeper exhibition of truth. He was leading his flock into the green pastures and beside the still waters.

The charm and variety of the preaching finds expression in many of the titles of the sermons: "The Open Fountain," "Altogether Lovely," "Sunshine in the Heart." "King's Gardens," "The Ministry of Hope."

Spurgeon's ministry cannot be wholly accounted for on the human plane. He was manifestly under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit in an unusual degree. He lived in daily dependence on that Divine One. Mrs. Spurgeon has told us how, on a Saturday evening, he would go into the little room he called his "den" and there pour out his soul, sometimes with strong crying and tears, for Divine help in the sermons of the next day. And she adds that some of his mightiest sermons were the outcome of such experiences. I remember one Sunday morning, when I

was sitting in the top gallery of the Tabernacle, by the clock, looking down on Spurgeon and the great congregation. He had not long begun to preach when an indescribable power attended his utterance and fell upon the audience. I realised that everything was possible—conversion, the drawing of the soul nearer to God, the calling forth of new messengers for Christ. And that was not a solitary occasion; there were often such sermons when a mighty tide swept over the congregation while he preached.

One gift Spurgeon possessed which is often longed for to-day. He had the ear of "the man in the street." His simplicity and clearness of speech, his homely illustrations and his touches of humour appealed to the masses. It is said that on a Sunday morning 'busmen in the City bound for South London could be heard calling, "Twopence over the water for Charlie"! And when the people reached the place of assembly they found more than they expected, they found a man who told them the secrets of their hearts. Many a casual hearer came to realise the sin that was spoiling his life and to long, above all things, for deliverance from it; then the message of the preacher would reveal the power of Christ to save and would lead the penitent to the Cross. Some came in burdened with the cares of life, or broken with sorrow, and Spurgeon, moved by a compassion learned of Christ, would take delight in lifting away the burden, or healing the wound.

Spurgeon was indeed a preacher to the masses, but he was not without a message to the highborn and the cultured. From the West End a stream of carriages would cross the bridges on a Sunday morning, and men and women known throughout the land would mingle with the crowd. Among his hearers from time to time were men like Lord John Russell, John Ruskin and, once at least, W. E. Gladstone, while leaders from other lands, visiting London came to the Tabernacle as a hallowed spot.

Spurgeon's was essentially a Bible ministry. He knew and loved the sacred Word; it was his treasure-house. He made the Bible sparkle. Passages that had been passed by as ordinary were seen in his exposition to shine with new meaning. All his teaching was founded on the Bible. This gave authority and strength to his sermons. Through him we heard the Divine Voice speaking.

The Tabernacle, great as it was, did not represent the limit of his audiences. The sermons in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall were attended by congregations of 10,000; those in the Agricultural Hall by 20,000; and on the Day of Humiliation and Prayer at the time of the Indian Mutiny he preached in the Crystal Palace to a congregation of more than 23,000, and this without any of our modern acoustical helps. After this great sermon he was so spent that he slept for nearly two days. In this discourse Spurgeon spoke with prophetic fervour against the national sins upon which he felt the judgments of God were being visited. In another memorable sermon, that on "Baptismal Regeneration," he

denounced the idea that through a ceremony a soul could be spiritually renewed. This sermon cost him not a few friends who thought their own teaching assailed, but many of them came back to him, and his witness to truth stood fast.

One remarkable feature of Spurgeon's ministry has yet to be named—his preaching through the printed page. From 1855, when he was only twenty-one, till his death in 1892, the sermons were published weekly and went throughout the world, translated into nearly forty languages. Indeed, the series went on long after his death and before its completion it was estimated that more than a hundred and fifty million copies of the sermons had been issued. This is certainly unique.

It is often debated whether Spurgeon would be equally successful to-day. One recognises the changed conditions of our time, but I am sure that a ministry so fresh, so vital, so full of Christ, so tender and loving in its quest of souls, and so endued with the Holy Spirit, could not fail to attract very many and to produce great and lasting spiritual results.

JOHN W. EWING.

THE MAN OF PRAYER

BEHIND the ministry of such a man as Spurgeon there must have been spiritual resources which could be sustained only by prayer. Granted the native genius, the mastery of nervous and telling Saxon speech, the imagination which clothed deep thoughts in picture language, the firm grasp of revealed truth, the happy humour and the wonderful flute-like voice, there was something more.

His sincerity was unquestioned even by his severest critics. His commonplace contemporaries in the ministry could not, by their jealousy, find the joints of his armour. Those who knew him best loved him most. In the blaze of publicity for well-nigh forty years his rectitude, benevolence, and genuineness of character blunted every arrow of malice. His essential humility before God preserved him from the perils of human flattery. His was the open secret: he was a man of prayer.

On that snowy morning of his conversion-day he rose before the sun to pray, and to read one of his bedside books. But he found no rest. He went forth into the storm, only to be driven into a primitive Methodist Chapel where, under the sermon, he was to find the way to peace and assurance. On 3rd May, 1850, he had two hours of prayer and of dedication of himself to God before walking the eight miles from Newmarket to Isleham Ferry for his baptism. "Baptism loosed my tongue," he affirmed, "and from that day it has never been quiet."

It is not possible to know much about the private prayers of any person unless they are self-disclosed. Spurgeon evidently

regarded prayer as a part of his work. He prayed about everything that happened to him, and everything he did. A postcard to an orphan boy, a letter to a friend, a note to a deacon, a request to his secretary: these would be wafted on their way with a breath of prayer. He never prayed for long because he was always praying. When out for a walk he would sometimes break into a discussion and pray with his companions while seated on a tree. There was nothing forced in all this. It was natural to him. He would meet a student in the college corridors, he would make kind enquiries, lay his hand on the lad's shoulder and say: "Stand still a minute." He would then commend the student to God, and pass on. Only an acknowledged man of prayer could do such things without affectation.

Prayer was no small part of his preparation for the pulpit. Speaking to students he says: "If you can dip your pens into your hearts, appealing in earnestness to the Lord, you will write well. If you can gather your matter on your knees at the gate of heaven, you will not fail to speak well. Prayer as a mental exercise will bring many subjects before the mind, and so help in the selection of a topic, while as a high spiritual engagement it will cleanse your inner eye that you may see truth in the light of God. Texts will often refuse to reveal their treasures till you open them with the key of prayer. Waiting upon God often turns darkness into light. Persevering enquiry at the sacred oracle uplifts the veil and gives grace to look into the deep things of God. Use prayer as a boring rod and wells of living water will leap up from the depths of the Word." "Look at your congregation," he adds, "there are always some sick folk among them, and many more who are soul-sick. Some are unsaved, others are seeking and cannot find. Many are desponding, and not a few believers are backsliding or mourning. There are widows' tears and orphans' sighs to be put into our bottle and poured out before the Lord. If you are a genuine minister of God you will stand as a priest before the Lord, spiritually wearing the ephod and the breastplate whereon you bear the names of the children of Israel, pleading for them within the veil." He could not thus have spoken to others about intercession for souls unless it had been his own practice.

It need not be said that Spurgeon preferred free prayer to a ready-made liturgy, but he was well aware that much free prayer fell sadly below the ideal. "There are meeting-houses in which the supplications are neither so devout nor so earnest as we desire. In other places the earnestness is so allied with ignorance and the devotion so marred with rant, that no intelligent believer can enter into the service with pleasure." This defect, we may hope, has largely been overcome in these days of better education, but it remains that our prayers can be the richest part of the service, if they are rightly ordered and earnestly and feelingly offered. They can also be the coldest and feeblest of all our words if our minds and hearts are not fully engaged with God.

Spurgeon held that the first necessity in public prayer is that it must be a matter of the heart. "Cast your whole soul into the exercise. If ever your whole manhood was engaged in anything, let it be in drawing near unto God in public. So pray, that by a divine attraction, you draw the whole congregation with you up to the throne of God. So pray, that by the power of the Holy Spirit resting on you, you express the desires and thoughts of everyone present, and stand as the one voice for the hundreds of beating hearts which are around you."

Another important matter on which he lays stress is that prayer in public must be appropriate to the occasion. "There is no need to make the public prayer a gazette of the week's events, or a register of the births, marriages and deaths of your people, but the general movements that have taken place in the congregation should be noted by the minister's careful heart. He should bring the joys and sorrows of his people before the throne of grace, and ask that the divine benediction may rest upon his flock in all their movements, their exercises, engagements and holy enterprises, and that the forgiveness of God may be extended to their shortcomings and innumerable sins."

He warns students against being too long in their public prayers. Length, of course, is a relative matter. In his day prayers were very long. Some of his own, which have been preserved from the shorthand writer's notes, and published in book form, are of considerable length by present-day standards. We never heard of anyone wearying of Spurgeon's own prayers, but few can wield the weapon of "All-Prayer" as he could. "Only one in a thousand would complain of you for being short," he tells his students, "while scores will murmur at your being wearisome in length." He offers another hint, by no means irrelevant to present practice on the part of some preachers of to-day. "Never appear to be closing, and then start off again for another five minutes. When friends make up their minds that you are about to conclude, they cannot, with a jerk, proceed again in a devout spirit." Two more counsels on public prayer may be mentioned: "Vary the length of your public prayers. Let there be sometimes two prayers instead of one very long prayer. Let us have anything so that our people do not come to regard any form of service as being appointed, and so relapse into a superstition from which they have escaped." "Vary the current of your prayers in intercession. There are many topics which require your attention: the Church in its weakness, its backslidings, its sorrows and its comforts; the outside world, the neighbourhood, unconverted hearers, the young people, the nation. Do not pray for all these every time, or your prayers will be long and probably uninteresting. As you would avoid a viper, keep from all attempts to work up spurious fervour in public devotion."

During Mr. Spurgeon's life-time a volume of his pulpit prayers was published by someone who had taken them down at

the public services. It was entitled "The Pastor in Prayer." To read these pleadings with God on behalf of believers, the unsaved, the hardened, the rebellious and unbelieving, the home, the nation, the world of sinners lost, and the Church, God's instrument for their saving, will warm the heart and inflame the zeal of any fainting minister. Some of these prayers are dated 1863, while Spurgeon was still a London sensation. Others are dated late in 1890, when the shadows of ill-health were creeping on and memories of bitter controversies weighed on his soul.

What men thought of Spurgeon's preaching has often been reported. There was only one opinion of his prayers. Moody said he would rather miss the sermon than the prayers, so moving and heart-warming were his pleadings with God. A. T. Pierson wrote: "His confession of sin is humble, his supplication fervent, his intercession importunate: but when he praises and extols God, it is as an eagle soaring toward the sun, and bearing you on his wings." Robertson Nicoll testified, "Mr. Spurgeon was a man of the stuff of which saints are made. This spirituality is so rare in men of great powers that it is invariably the way to influence. It inspires a kind of awe. Men bow before it, feel themselves in the presence of the eternal world, think wistfully of their own state, and are touched, for a moment at least, by a certain sense of wonder and regret."

GILBERT LAWS.

THE PURITAN

"Spurgeon the Puritan pastor evangelist," the late R. C. Underwood has called him, and many of his contemporaries spoke of him as "the last of the Puritans." Yet as a typical man of the nineteenth century, he was unlike the seventeenth century Puritans. The contrasts lie in the mutations that came about by descent and the change of environment. His sympathies were broader than theirs, and the background of his life had the spaciousness and richness of the Victorian era, which the Stuart days lacked. Still, the cast of his thought and the fabric of his life bore such striking resemblance to theirs that he can readily be called Puritan, and such was he that we cannot believe that the Puritans ended with such a clap of thunder as C. H. Spurgeon.

The Puritanism of Spurgeon is more than an atmosphere. It is an inheritance. The lineal descendants in the early nineteenth century of the Puritans were the Evangelicals and the Dissenters. Amongst the latter the most Puritanic were the Particular Baptists. Spurgeon, son and grandson of Dissenting ministers, imbibed without a doubt his first draughts of Puritanism from his parent and grandparent. But it became peculiarly effective in him owing to the society in which he spent the most formative years following his conversion. The Cambridgeshire Baptists were of the Particular

persuasion, and in the villages were of a strong Calvinistic type. Amongst these the young Spurgeon's lot was cast. Foremost amongst the influences in shaping his thought was a person so humble as the cook of the school in which he taught. She was an out-and-out Calvinist and her dogmatics prevailed with him. Thereafter he went as a youth of seventeen among the primitive Christians of Waterbeach. In consequence, when he arrived in London, it was canvassed for quite a while as to whether he would conform to the stricter order of Baptists, and perhaps the criticisms of their leaders, C. W. Banks and James Wells, had a saving effect upon the mind of Spurgeon and drove rather than induced him into wider ways.

The earliest sermons, those preached before the Metropolitan Tabernacle was built, are more Calvinistic and more Puritanic than those of subsequent years. He rang the changes frequently upon peculiarly Calvinistic doctrines and drew heavily upon Puritan literature for his sermons, delighting to smite the Arminians hip and thigh, and now the Antinomians, and rejoicing to illustrate from the hymns of the Wesleys that whilst brother John pronounced Arminian doctrines, Charles taught the people called Methodists to sing sound and high Calvinism. There is a perceptible and welcome change that comes over the sermons with the passing of the years. They mellow, are less rhetorical, and at the same time the Puritan element becomes more genial, less exacting and wider in sympathy, and the doctrinal appeal is directed more and more to the heart.

The manner of life called Puritan is the efflorescence of a virile faith, which is eminently doctrinal—the major doctrines of Puritanism. John Calvin's offspring may be summarised as belief in (1) The Sovereignty of God, which leads to the doctrine of the Divine initiative in salvation and was expressed in terms of the Biblical doctrine of election. (2) The Depravity of Man, which implied that man could not co-operate in his salvation. (3) The Mediatorial Office and Work of Jesus Christ. (4) The Bible as the Authority of Revelation. These are the major themes of Spurgeon's preaching. The compendium of his theology is his sermons. The first sermon in the first volume of the New Park Street pulpit is on "The Immutability of God." It is thoroughly theological and appears to have drawn upon the discourse of Stephen Charnock upon the same subject. It was a favourite theme of the Puritans.

He spoke in most vivid terms of human depravity. "I am bound to the doctrine of the depravity of the human heart," he said, "because I find myself depraved in heart, and have daily proof that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing." He never forsook warning men of the perils of unbelief, and in his earlier days his descriptions of hell were luridly Dantean. He preached this peril of damnation because, like Bunyan, he had had such a terrible experience of conviction of sin.

His doctrine of election was Biblical in origin, but established in experience. It was not the application of a rigid logical argument as with many of the Puritans, but rather the application of Romans ix, by way of his own experience. He put it thus. "The thought struck me, 'How did you come to be a Christian?' I sought the Lord. 'But how did you come to seek the Lord?' The truth flashed across my mind in a moment—I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him. . . . Then in a moment I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the author of my faith; and so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession. I ascribe my change wholly to God." In the words of one of his popular books, the salvation of the believer is "All of Grace."

This was Calvinism, which he accepted, because "Calvinism presents less difficulty than any rival system. It is the gospel and nothing else." Nor did he shrink from the dogma of predestination. "They who think that predestination and the fulfilment of the Divine purpose are contrary to the free agency of man, know not what they affirm. . . . Man walks without a fetter, yet treads in the very steps which God has ordained for him to tread in. . . . My consciousness teaches me that man does as he wills, but my faith teaches me that God does as He wills, and the two are not contrary to each other." Thus he held together Divine predestination and human freedom, Divine election and human responsibility. When charged with inconsistency, he replied, "O glorious inconsistencies!"

The Grace of God to Spurgeon was made known only in the Mediatorial Work of Jesus Christ. The Cross was the central theme of his preaching and at the heart of his thinking and life. The covers of the volumes of his published sermons bore the words, "We preach Christ crucified." He accepted without question the Puritan doctrine that the death of Christ was vicarious, substitutionary and penal. He uses these terms frequently. "All joy is gone from life if substitution is untrue." But whilst he accepted the irresistible Puritan logic of the doctrine of the Atonement, his love of his Saviour recalls the ecstasy of Bernard of Clairvaux, and the volume of sermons upon texts taken from the Canticles bears comparison, all in Spurgeon's favour, over the Commentary of the great Cistercian.

The authority for his theology lay in the Bible. As the sharpness of the attack of his antagonists of the Downgrade increased, he fell back more and more upon the Word of God as being comprised and limited to the Bible. Sermons appear with titles such as "The Infallibility of the Bible." Like the Puritans, to Spurgeon the Bible was final and authoritative. "When a book inspires a man," he exclaimed, "it must be inspired." It is idle speculation to suggest what his attitude would have been

to modern evangelic scholarship such as that of Manson and Dodd. Spurgeon does not belong to our times, and to conceive him in relation to these matters is to cease to think of him as Spurgeon. It was enough for him to believe in the Bible as plenarily and verbally inspired. In this he is more closely related to the Puritans, and to their times, than to our own.

"To the Puritan the wilfulness of life in which the men of the Renaissance had revelled seemed unworthy of life's character and end. His aim was to attain self-command, to be master of himself, of his thought and speech and acts."* Puritan ethics derived from Puritan theology. These Spurgeon accepted. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever," says the Westminster Catechism, and this he heartily approved. With the Puritans he eschewed the theatre and the dance, but on different grounds. Unlike them he did not hesitate to break the mood of gravity with fun.

The ethical problems of Spurgeon's day were more closely related to those of the seventeenth century than to the mid twentieth, and he made his way through them with Puritan precision and thoroughness.

The social and economic problems he solved by his genial Puritan spirit. He does not seem to have heard of Karl Marx and yet their lives were conterminous. Spurgeon accepted the Capitalism which Tawney has shown grew side by side with Puritanism. His ethics of property were Puritan. But he was of a generous turn of mind and philanthropy, the tender child of Capitalism which the Welfare State has abandoned, expressed itself in his orphanage and the almshouses upon which he lavished his fortune. He never sought to make capital. He spent all he earned, and in Puritan fashion believed that all he received came from God's hand, and he looked and asked for it with the simplicity of a little child. What he had, he had on loan from the Lord. He abhorred debt like the plague. He belonged to that simple society in which he had his origins, where prosperity consisted in having enough, and where debt was a slough which left its mark upon all who fell into it.

Spurgeon drew heavily upon the Puritan writers. He was more at home in their books than in those of his contemporaries, and in his younger days must almost have lived in their pages. This accounts for a certain archaism in both his preaching and writing which was found to be attractive to his own generation, which had not lost familiarity with the sonorous cadences of the Authorised Version of the Bible. John Clifford, writing in a review of a reprint of "The Saint and his Saviour" twenty years after its first publication, said that it had the flavour of a past time. In a measure all Spurgeon's work had. Typical man of the mid-nineteenth century, his speech often savoured of the seventeenth. Hence his strength and beauty of style and his striking choice of

* J. R. Green, *A Short History of England*, p. 463.

Anglo-Saxon words. Hence, too, his popularity in no small degree, for the great majority of his readers were not drawn from the cultured groups of his generation, but the common people throughout the land who, in thought and language, were far nearer to the age of the Commonwealth of England than to that of the Commonwealth of British Nations.

Among his Puritan favourites were Brooks, Owen, Howe, Goodwin, Manton, Baxter and, not least, Bunyan. And perhaps Spurgeon took his cue from Bunyan. For in Bunyan there are three features often absent from the great Puritan theologians. His language is homespun. So is Spurgeon's. Bunyan is never dull or turgid as they were at times. Nor ever was Spurgeon. The style of John Ploughman, a style derived from the careful study of old "chap" books resembles Bunyan. The great Puritans are profound and logical theologians but often logic ruled the heart. Not without reason did one vein of Puritan theology in spite of all its original wealth peter out in the aridity of Arianism. It lacked the corrective of a virile experience of grace. Not so Bunyan or Spurgeon. In them theology and experience are compounded together. Perhaps the similarity was not so unconsciously formed as we may think. Spurgeon could recite at an early age huge lengths of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; he knew all Bunyan's works and prepared an edition of the *Water of Life*. Puritan theology in both of them was more than doctrine, it was living preaching, and just as we might say that Bunyan is the popular seventeenth century exponent of Puritan theology, so Spurgeon served the nineteenth. As to-day the *Pilgrim's Progress* has an assured place in English classics, so may many of the sermons from the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit and pages of *John Ploughman* when the years give a right perspective. As such they will add to the treasury of English Puritan thought and life.

It is an error to say that Spurgeon was the last of the Puritans. Puritanism never dies. Its influence may wane, itself lives on, to wax again with new power. It undergoes transformations, and the twentieth century is not without its Puritans. The most exact assessment of Spurgeon is the great popular Puritan of the Victorian Age. He popularised Puritanism as it had never been before.

"It was not Puritanism," someone has said, "that stamped a lofty moral ideal upon a great part of America. It was the Puritan." It can be said that it was not his Puritanism that laid so tremendous an evangelic impress upon his age, it was the Puritan Spurgeon himself. Account for his power as you will, he is unaccountable save as the man who fulfilled the Puritan ideal. He lived for God and the doing of God's will. He was a living instrument whom God both made and found responsive to the least whisper of the Spirit. He was "All of Grace."

A. J. BARNARD.

SPURGEON AND ATHENS

HE rarely went there, for his sympathy with philosophers was imperfect. He felt with Tertullian: "Let them look to it who have produced a stoic and platonic and dialectic Christianity. We need no curiosity who have Jesus Christ, no inquiry who have the Gospel." Spurgeon declared in one of his later sermons: "If in the groves where Socrates and Plato gathered disciples by their philosophy, there should not be found a single philosopher who believes in God, so much the worse for the philosophers, but it does not affect the Gospel or our faith in it." He was no enemy of sound learning, but he took it for granted that sound learning would approve of the Gospel as he preached it; if it did not, "so much the worse for the philosophers." "It is better," he said, "to believe what comes out of God's mouth and be called a fool, than to believe what comes out of the mouths of philosophers and be, therefore, esteemed a wise man." An admirable sentiment, no doubt, if God never speaks through philosophers. The truth is: Spurgeon was a remarkably successful preacher but he was neither a systematic nor a philosophical theologian. That is not to say that he had no understanding of theology. Every great preacher has a theology and Spurgeon was no exception. Very few men in the nineteenth century were Spurgeon's rivals in his clear and profound understanding of the Calvinism expounded by the Puritans and revised by Andrew Fuller. He contributed little to the development of this type of theology, although he was markedly original in his preaching of it. He belongs to the company of the great Victorian theological preachers, Robertson, Liddon, Dale, rather than to the company of preaching theologians like Newman, Martineau and F. D. Maurice. His theology was the theology of the pulpit rather than of the lecture-room, and it was given to the world in a thousand sermons rather than in half a dozen treatises. A theology is none the worse for being preached. His philosophy? He had little of it. He was essentially a Biblical preacher. He was not greatly concerned with the question, "Can man, by searching, find out God?" But when anyone asked whether God, by searching, had found out man, he gave an immediate answer. He gave the answer in every sermon he preached.

We are getting far enough away from the nineteenth century to see the real significance of its great men. There were "eminent Victorians," and we can use the epithet without Lytton Strachey's irony. A considerable number were in their prime and publishing influential books when Spurgeon was beginning his London ministry. Tennyson published "In Memoriam" in 1850, the year of Spurgeon's conversion. During the following decade, F. D. Maurice published his "Theological Essays" and was dismissed from King's College because of the essay on eternal punishment: McCleod Campbell published "The Nature of the

Atonement," a new and important account of the doctrine: Mansell published "The Limits of Religious Knowledge," a book by an Anglican ecclesiastic which afterwards had some influence on the development of Agnosticism: Darwin published "The Origin of Species" and Mill, "On Liberty."

The middle years of the century saw the classical statement of political Liberalism, the steady growth of theological liberalism and, in philosophy, the rise of British idealism. The general movement of theology for the next forty years was away from the rigid Calvinism of the early evangelicals. The movement gathered strength after 1860. The humanising of Calvinistic dogma, the emphasis on divine immanence, the historical study of the Bible, the growth of naturalistic agnosticism, alarmed many evangelicals and Spurgeon probably had these trends of thought in mind when he protested against the philosophers and other learned men of the day.

Few British thinkers of the later Victorian period, however, retain any great influence to-day, and the anti-Christian writers whose influence is potent in the modern world, were almost unknown in this country when Spurgeon and many others were attacking the less enduring infidelities. Feuerbach, Marx, Comte and Nietzsche are the fathers of the atheistic humanism which is our deadliest enemy. But if the great infidels were disregarded, so also were some of the great defenders of the Faith. Kierkegaard's thought proved to be a delayed-action bomb which did not explode until nearly a hundred years after his death but which powerfully influences modern theology and philosophy. Dostoevski now stands out as one of the greatest Christian prophets of the whole period, and there is more in him than we have yet assimilated. We have to regard Spurgeon and evangelical theology in this context; we must not make extravagant claims for them. Both the preacher and the theology brought light and gladness to the hearts of multitudes of people. But they had little to say to their minds, and it is not unimportant that the thinness and "intellectual barrenness" which Sir James Stephen noticed in evangelicalism after the time of Scott, Milner and Simeon, persisted for many years. The Gospel must come into contact with the art, the philosophy, the culture, of men if it is to shape their manners and institutions. However great an evangelist a preacher may be, he cannot permanently succeed in influencing the life of the community unless he is helped by that atmosphere of custom, opinion, and conviction, which incessantly plays upon the hearts and minds of people, and from which they breathe in only half consciously those thoughts and standards they regard as uniquely their own. If he is to play a part in changing the life of a nation, then the newspapers, magazines, books which people read, the towns in which they live and work, their sculpture, painting and music, their economic system, their government, even their terms of speech and their fugitive thoughts, must also play their part

and collaborate with him in bringing God into the remembrance of men. But it is not possible to gain this collaboration if Christian thinkers and preachers, for whatever reason, make no attempt to direct into Christian channels the deep and slow moving streams of thought and feeling which ultimately determine the life of the community. The great evangelists of the last century were so successful not only because they preached the great evangelical doctrines; their congregations breathed in evangelicalism from the intellectual and cultural atmosphere of the day. The preacher urged upon them beliefs which they already vaguely accepted. Our generation breathes a different atmosphere. Secularism is the climate of our time and our contemporaries think God has long been dead. Can we hope for any widespread revival of religion until fresh minds begin to blow through the dark and murky air?

How shall we persuade those of our contemporaries who believe that the Christian God is dead and who are unable to conceive of any kind of transcendent reality? One way of dealing with them is to deny that they are really atheists. In spite of themselves, and however they may argue, in practice they do believe in a god. They deify humanity, for example, or the economic process. In other words, they believe in a god which they have fashioned for themselves. That is, they are idolaters. Now the true God who has revealed Himself through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has shown that idolatry is intellectually untenable, that it can provide no adequate basis for good living, that it can never bring life or peace to the soul. What God has disclosed in Revelation is confirmed by history and experience. The idolater should, therefore, forsake his idols, repent, and turn to the living God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is a characteristic approach of the evangelical preacher. Do not argue with the unbeliever about the existence of God; show him his need, and point him to the Cross. Faith is the gift of God; preach the Gospel and trust the Holy Spirit to make a point of contact.

So far, so good, if all atheists are really idolaters, for then they stand within the confines of religion and we can use the religious approach from Revelation. But what if atheists are atheists and there is no common religious ground? We should note that although comparatively few people call themselves atheists, because they have not entirely recovered from the hang-over of yesterday's faith, for multitudes religion is almost entirely irrelevant; they practise atheism even if they do not wholly believe it. How can a Christian preacher who believes that his task is to bear witness to a revelation which he apprehends by faith, appeal to those who hold that there is no God who can reveal Himself? Two courses are open. He may urge that believers and unbelievers have common ground in their possession of reason and that although God is apprehended by faith alone, reason can show that such faith is reasonable, and that knowledge is impossible without the acceptance of certain presuppositions which must be accepted in

faith because they are not susceptible of strictly rational proof. The Augustinian tradition in theology has generally accepted this view. We believe in order that we may understand. Or the Christian apologist may hold that without any appeal to the Revelation accepted by faith, he can, by means of strictly rational argument, establish the existence of God and certain truths about His nature, such as His unity, knowledge and providence. This is the position of the Thomists. If it can be maintained in spite of the attacks of most modern philosophers and the retreat of most modern theologians, it has the advantage that it establishes the existence of God without relying on any arguments from revelation which unbelievers regard as inadmissible. This type of theistic philosophy has, however, made little appeal to most evangelical theologians. Some follow Karl Barth in denying the possibility of natural theology. The philosopher, they hold, can give us an idea of God which may well be an idol; he cannot bring us near to the God of revelation, the living God. Others appeal to religious experience in order to establish the existence of God. The difficulty with both kinds of argument is that they do not indicate any common ground on which the Christian can meet an unbeliever who rejects the idea of revelation or the validity of religious experience. We should be circumspect in our acceptance of any theology which repudiates or does scant justice to the claims of reason. True, it did not please God to save His people by means of argument, but a theology cannot be permanently effective if it is irrational. One of our most urgent needs is to find an approach to our contemporaries whose culture is almost wholly secular. We must not substitute philosophy for the Gospel, but we shall do well to recognise with nearly all the greatest Christian teachers, that if the Gospel is to permeate the life of society, to direct our thought, and to shape our social and political institutions, it cannot afford to reject the powerful aid of the philosophic thought which reached its first perfection in Athens.

G. J. M. PEARCE.

THE MASTER THEME

THERE is only one Gospel, but there are as many gospels as there are believers. When Paul speaks of "my gospel," he speaks of the mighty acts of God in Redemption not as an observer, but as a believer; he does not so much point to those acts, as testify that he is himself involved in them; he does not merely indicate the Light—he is incandescent.

In this sense—a sense distinguishable from implicit doctrines and explicit utterances—we may speak of "Spurgeon's gospel." When Spurgeon spoke of his message, he put himself into it, and something he once said of particular occasions in preaching holds true in a measure of all his ministry: "I have known what it is

to use up all my ammunition, and then I have, as it were, rammed myself into the great gospel gun, and I have fired myself at my hearers, all my experience of God's goodness, all my consciousness of sin, and all my sense of the power of the gospel."

The truths he proclaimed in public throughout his ministry were those which had mastered him as a lad. His message, like his powers of oratory, seemed complete from the start. It was observed of him, and he himself claimed, that in this the passing years wrought no change. "Our great master theme," he said to his students, "is the good news from heaven; the tidings of mercy through the atoning death of Jesus, mercy to the chief of sinners through believing in Jesus." He longed that it might be said of him, as of a certain unnamed minister, "He never failed to set forth God as love, and Christ as the atonement for sin."

Spurgeon's gospel reveals evidences, as it is set forth in his sermons, of the bitter struggles of his pre-conversion years, and of the joyful sense of discovery and relief which succeeded them. To the profound experiences of those times we may trace the passionate entreaty of his appeals, and his recognition of the power of sin in the soul, and the soul's strife against God; thence also comes his deep conviction of the sovereignty of the operation of the Divine Grace. "I must confess," he says, "I never would have been saved if I could have helped it. As long as ever I could, I rebelled and revolted and struggled against God. When He would have me pray, I would not pray; and when He would have me listen to the sound of the ministry, I would not. And when I heard, and the tear rolled down my cheek, I wiped it away, and defied Him to melt my soul. But long before I began with Christ, He began with me." Of his spiritual condition during the five years occupied with this struggle he uses such phrases as "Awful agony," "an intolerable burden," and even, "If God does not send me to hell, He ought to do it." It was to souls in that depth of gloom that he addressed this proven gospel, the good news which, for him, had ushered in the raptures of dawn—"I thought I could dance all the way home," he exults.

To Spurgeon, the Gospel was simply God sovereignly and graciously at work upon the hearts of sinful men—men for whom no philosophy, no ethic, no formula, no merely intellectual apprehension of truth, could suffice. It is noteworthy that in an essay written in his unregenerate days he quotes the very text which was later used to his conversion; but until the Spirit applied the truth to his own heart he remained unmoved. When he was converted, he tells us, he felt as though he had never heard the Gospel before, as though the preachers to whom he had listened had never preached it; small wonder, then, that he insisted upon the distinction between the proclamation of the Gospel, and the effectual calling of God.

This sense of a personal Divine intervention in saving power as the prime ingredient in the conversion experience gives a very

intimate and personal note to Spurgeon's gospel. Salvation is pre-eminently a matter between the sinner and the Saviour, and for the saved sinner "Jesus only" is the chief delight. Of the moment of his conversion, he says, "I could almost have looked my eyes away"; and of his beliefs, "My creed is Jesus Christ . . . Christ is the whole Gospel." At times he indulges in lyrical language which reminds us of the mediaeval mystics, and uses phrases which we might be ready to criticise as over-sentimental; on the lips of a lesser man this would be affectation, but none can fail to see that Spurgeon's one desire was to preach Christ. At the centre of all his utterance there is, not a system of doctrine, not a code of behaviour, but the Person of the Redeemer. There is warmth in his Calvinism and life in his Puritanism because the Master is his theme.

There is an introduction to his gospel which deserves notice. Often we find him setting before his hearers the kind of situation he had endured before his great deliverance—a period he sums up in the quaint phrase, "I met with Moses." Like his great heroes, Paul, Augustine and Bunyan, he had known what the Puritans called "Law-work" in his soul. We are not, therefore, surprised to hear the rumble of Sinaitic thunder in his preaching ere the peaceful promise of the gospel sounds forth. "The law goes first, like the needle," he says, "and draws the gospel thread after it."

There were two classes of people to whom he was specially concerned to preach the Saving Word—the children and the dying. He suffered from no misgivings as to the possibility of child conversion. "Grace operates on some minds almost too early for recollection," he says; we hear him pleading with mothers to pray with their children, and find him writing to the children of members of the College Conference urging them to believe in Christ. And the dying: someone has said that the printed sermons were popular with the dying, since they dealt almost exclusively with the great concern of the soul; but Spurgeon, like Baxter, looked upon every congregation as a company of dying men. What scathing words he had for superficial preaching! "There are dying men and women assembled to hear the word of salvation, and they are put off with such vanity as this," he exclaims, regarding a sermon which spent its strength seeking to explain the troubling of the waters of Bethesda. "While men are dying and hell is filling," he says, "to be muttering about an Armageddon and peeping between the folded leaves of destiny," is "the veriest drivel . . . bones for dogs."

For such an audience, only Truth would suffice, and emphasis must fall upon the very heart of truth. The urgency of men's need, and the awfulness of the preacher's responsibility, would allow of no lesser message. "Give the people every truth," he counsels, "but the great truth is the Cross, that God so loved the world . . . Sound that note upon your silver trumpets, or if you are only a ram's horn sound it forth, and the walls of Jericho will

come down." And again: "Mere moral themes are a wooden dagger; the great truths of Revelation are sharp swords." The doctrine of Believers' Baptism never had a more doughty champion, yet he gave it a subordinate place. He could plead the cause of the needy with passion, yet there was a word which took precedence of the plea. He held to, and with passing years found increasing joy in, the promise of the Lord's Return, to him "a solemn, practical fact," but it never gained the central place in his preaching. Professing ignorance of the secrets of apocalyptic visions, he declared, "I am rather called to preach the Gospel than to open up prophecy." All these must submit to the mastery of the great theme of the saving power of the Crucified. "Remain unwaveringly the champions of a soul-winning gospel," he directs his men. The word which had brought new life to him was the only one he could trust for others, and trust it he did without qualification. It was the revealed Word, the mighty Spirit would use it, and conversions were to be expected as the normal issue of its proclamation.

Tears, smiles and dogma all found their due place in Spurgeon's gospel. There was a strong emotional strain in the message, which was ever aimed more at men's hearts than at their heads. "We must love men to Jesus," he says, and the passion gives a glow even to the black and white of print. "Heart-warming mixture," Maclaren called his writings. Yet amid stern words, earnest pleadings and high themes there is the kindly relief of humour, the attractive sparkle of the homely wit with which he was richly endowed. "If dulness were a divine power, the world would have been converted now, for the pulpit has never been without a superabundant supply of it," is his justification. But he insists through all on the need for teaching—"Nothing can compensate for the lack of *teaching* the truth as it is in Jesus," and that teaching must be definite and clear. There must be no uncertain sound from the pulpit. "Preach with decision . . . we have a fixed faith to preach." There could be, for him, no lack of definiteness on such matters as the Trinity, the Divine authority of Scripture, Substitution, the necessity of the New Birth, salvation by grace and justification by faith, the depravity of human nature, the terror of the Lord, regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit.

Spurgeon has much to teach us, in matter and emphasis and manner—and yet we cannot preach his gospel. Only he could ever do that, and each of us must, in the apostolic sense, preach his own gospel. But Spurgeon's Master Theme has its worth for us, even after the lapse of the years, even in print. It was Sankey who once said, when attending the Metropolitan Tabernacle, "It has always been my custom, when coming from my own land to this country, to visit this Tabernacle, to have my torch lighted anew." And to dwell again on the Master Theme which mastered C. H. Spurgeon is to be ourselves rekindled in love for the Redeemer and for all within the reach of our ministry.

S. J. DEWHURST.

HERITAGE

FOR many people there is still some magic in the name of Spurgeon. They never heard him preach, maybe they have never read a single line of anything he wrote, yet that name conjures up a wistful, romantic "something." For others, generally in the same category of ignorance, the name produces sheer nausea! Again, it is highly probable that many who make application to the College bearing his name apply because of the name, as if they might catch the whisper of his voice, or become infected by some peculiar grace. But there is a legacy, if such it may be called, and men discern it with the passing of the years. I will attempt to portray that heritage as it seems to have come down to me.

First, naturally, *he called men into a company of zealots.* Their enthusiasm was concentrated in the task of glorifying Christ. Their work was to preach, and live for, the Gospel. He preached no new theology, but related the action of Christ for sinful men to the people of his generation in a language they could understand. Conscious of the real, deep relationship into which he had entered with God through his Saviour, his heart burned that others should know his Lord also. I think it was as simple as that. He preached for a verdict, and would not be denied. Some have discovered this as a new truth through Buber and Farmer! He preached with passion, for he was in agony to think of men living without Christ. But in far greater measure he appealed to the intellect. He writes: "Sermons must have real teaching in them . . . nothing can compensate for the absence of teaching . . . Rousing appeals to the affections are excellent, but if they are not backed up by instruction they are a mere flash in the pan, powder consumed, and no shot sent home. Rest assured that the most fervid revivalism will wear itself out in mere smoke, if it be not maintained by the fuel of teaching. The divine method is to put the law in the mind, then write it on the heart; the judgment is enlightened, and then the passions subdued."

Secondly, but not necessarily in order of importance, I think of his *vision*. There is little doubt that he would have liked to be the flaming prophet striding the whole land, emulating Wesley, and calling all men everywhere to repent. But he spent most of his life in one pastorate. His vision was of an evangelised Britain, and then of the world, and he always worked towards the fulfilling of that vision. Generally, the men from the College went to decadent churches or new areas in which there was no Baptist witness, and he supported them financially. Glance at a volume of *The Sword and the Trowel* about a dozen years after the College had begun to send men out, and you will read reports of fifty churches being started. The strategy was planned for this country in his study. His money was put into men and not buildings, for he was concerned with souls, not fabric. Wherever

he could find a contact in a foreign country he would send a man—to Haiti or the Falklands, to Australia, Canada, South Africa, America and Europe. He constantly rejoiced over the men who went out with the B.M.S. and during even the darkest days he strove to keep the College and the Missionary Society bound closely together. But his vision was not just that the Church should grow throughout the world, but that the BAPTIST Church should declare the truth of the Gospel and spread abroad believer's baptism which, he was convinced, was vital for the witness and progress of every believing Christian. Was that vision wrong? Would he again to-day sever his connection with evangelicals in the Anglican Communion, because "congresses in which Christ and antichrist are brought together cannot but exercise a very unhealthy influence even upon the most decided followers of the truth"! I cannot tell. I can only seek to follow that vision that confined the training in the College to Baptists, and sought to plant the Gospel and create Baptist witness in every part of the world.

Thirdly, part of that inheritance must surely be his amazing *adaptability*. By this I do not mean that remarkable aptitude he possessed for amending his sermons; as, for instance, when the lights went out suddenly in the Tabernacle and he spoke extempore in the darkness upon the Light of the world, and a man was converted. Rather, I would lay stress upon his ability to assess the needs of his generation, to adjust policies in a moment, to plan short and long term projects to meet new situations. When a sudden strike or unemployment comes, he is immediately organising soup kitchens, arranging for rooms to be hired in which men may meet and learn new trades—and hear the Gospel! His ventures in the Orphanage, the Colportage Association, the College, are well known, but there were also his almshouses, lay preachers' bands, Open Air Mission, Country Mission (to provide holidays for the poor), his Ministers' Clothing Society, missionary working parties, Maternal Society, his work in police courts and gaols and fairs, his Sermon Tract Society that distributed 100,000 tracts in nine years; his Book Fund for poor ministers (which also supplied many books "to clergymen of the Church of England whose stipends are too small to allow them to purchase them") and his Pensions Fund. All this apart from the new weapon of propaganda through the publication of weekly sermons, of which over 150 million copies were sold, and the commentaries and devotional books that were published to instruct in the Christian Faith. He used the lantern lecture freely—would he not to-day have used as freely and as eagerly the radio and the film? I think he would now be thinking out how he could capture television for the Christian Church.

A fourth strand links itself together in my mind: his love of *scholarship* and his desire for *tolerance*. He laid it down as a rule for the College, some ninety years ago, that every man should have

a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, "and a minister should not consider himself equipped without this." In an age of scanty education he sought to give a man knowledge in many realms from biology to chemistry. He studied hard and expected men to do the same. For the purpose of writing a book on Commentaries, for example, he passed under review between three and four thousand commentaries. In *The Sword and the Trowel* in one year over 150 books would be reviewed. He was especially concerned that people should know the history of the Church, and seldom were there biographies of less than six Puritan and Baptist leaders in one volume. His own work had the stamp of wide reading and acute thinking, but it was always related to what he rightly considered to be the most important task of the minister, that of preaching the whole Counsel of God. But is it true to say that he was tolerant? The statement must be qualified. He was mightily intolerant of anything or anyone who would sidetrack him into arguments upon minor points of the faith which were of little moment! Such things seemed to him "like a lion engaged upon a mouse-hunt . . . or a man-of-war looking for a lost water butt." The core of the matter was Jesus Christ. "His person, offices and work must be our one great, all-comprehending theme." With lesser things he grows impatient. "More and more am I jealous lest any views on prophecy, church government, politics, or even systematic theology, should withdraw one of us from glorifying in the cross of Christ . . . Your guess at the number of the beast . . . your conjectures concerning a personal antichrist—forgive me, I count them but mere bones for dogs . . . I would sooner pluck one brand from the burning than explain all mysteries." But with sincere seekers after truth he showed an amazing tolerance for his age, which has not been fully appreciated. When the Principal of the College in that day published a book, he can write of it, "we do not subscribe to the author's system of interpretation, but his expositions always command our respect." Of another, whose work was, frankly, from a higher critical position, he says, "He seems to deny the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, and yet we believe his views are far more a difference of expression than a difference of belief from our own . . . we wish this volume a wide circulation." Again, in the year of the Down-grade controversy, a year when tolerance was a scarce commodity, we find him giving a searching analysis of a book by C. A. Briggs, and showing qualified support for it—e.g., Briggs "thinks the Massoretic text very unreliable. So do we." On the transliteration of the Divine Name as Jahveh, he writes: "We approve of this, with a wish that our translators had been fired with an equal courage." Then he says, "Our author opines, and we concur in his opinion that 'no true scholar will despise critical conjecture in cases where the external evidence is unsatisfactory and the text is manifestly corrupt.' We quote these words advisedly . . . We believe in treating the Holy Book and every

other according to the rules of common sense." Here, surely, is a breadth of understanding that, if it had been perceived by others, might have changed the history of our denomination in the last fifty years.

Preaching for a verdict, preaching the whole counsel of God: a constant vision of the World Church and world needs: a readiness to match the Gospel and adapt our methods of its presentation to meet a changing situation: a mind subservient to the major task, a heart that will not be torn away from essentials yet will ever be tolerant of those who seek the truth; these are our heritage. From Spurgeon? Yes, and from Calvin, and from Augustine and Paul, too.

E. WORSTEAD.

THE THEOLOGIAN

HE *inherited* his theology, for he was bred to it at home, though he stood at a remove from its glory; then, still young, he *experienced* it, with the result that the lure of Christ was over him for ever; thereafter he *preached* it, as a man on whom Christ's hand rested in sovereign ordination. Thus the *man* and his *message* are so interlocked that unless both are considered, neither can fitly be understood.

I. THE MAN

As to his *status*, he is one of that beloved Baptist trinity whose memory will never cease to be revered—Bunyan, Carey and Spurgeon. Bunyan's allegory will remain the soul's classic on conversion, especially to those who have been relentlessly driven by the sense of sin; Carey embodies our deep sense of missionary obligation, and Serampore and the Indian Church will be his abiding memorial; Spurgeon is alive and dynamic in persistent influence through his sermons and the College that proudly yet humbly bears his name. Magic still holds within the very name of Spurgeon.

The reason for his theological influence is as simple as the man himself, incomparable genius though he was—his theology held the minimum of theory and the maximum of reality, for it was a true and adequate transcript of the religion which began in that memorable "Look!" Theology, of course, is not religion, as so many have confused it, but the science or rational account of religion. Hence a bad theology is the deadly enemy of vital religion, while an adequate theology is its closest friend and interpreter.

That was the contribution Spurgeon made to his age—an adequate and true expression of the faith he had in Christ.

His theological *inheritance*: another contributor will deal with Spurgeon the Puritan, so I need touch on that point only so far as it is essential to this theme, his theology. He was bred to

the classics and knew the worth of a good education, but what was of far more importance was that he was bred to the Bible and the Puritan interpretation of it—the sovereignty of God, the grace of the Living Christ, and the growth of the Spirit of God within the believing community and the individual soul, since Puritanism is essentially individualistic. He was a master of Puritan theology even when in his teens, a remarkable fact, and as indubitable as it was extraordinary. His thinking therefore was not determined by it, though it was his guide and mentor. What food is to the body, nourishing every phase of it, yet is only raw material for its varied life, so was Puritan theology to Spurgeon. He was the slave of no scheme or book or system, but a free man in Christ, as was Paul earlier.

From earliest days he was bathed in the love and prayer of home. His mother, alarmed at the dynamic personality of Charles, interceded with passion that God would save his soul. What a mother she was, let this illustrate: "How can I ever forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about my neck, prayed, 'O that my son might live before Thee.'"

He was disciplined by that stern "law-work" which created puritan conscience—the fiercest in all theological history—and its effect upon him was so dire that for five bitter, burdened years he was as a soul haunted by sin. The glory even of summer was eclipsed by the chill darkness that lay like the "second death" on mind and heart. On one occasion this was his confession: "I know I can never again suffer what I have suffered; I never can, except I be sent to hell, know more of agony than I have known." No wonder as a boy his heart leapt when he read in Bunyan how Pilgrim lost his burden. Yet even then his own was on his back. There have been those who have criticised Spurgeon's burst of ecstasy, but it might have died on their lips had they themselves known a tithe of the agony he had experienced in conscience prior to his dramatic deliverance. It is only the unscathed who laugh at wounds. And all the while his genius, inexplicable yet uncontroversial, slept within him until his glorious Master came. Under His touch it stirred, then awoke, and was for ever made captive by the vision of His cross.

"O, glory of the lighted mind,
How dull I'd been, how blind!"

His "Damascus Road"—he *experienced* it. How memorable it was his own word makes clear: "He who has ever stood before God, convicted and condemned, with the rope about his neck, is the man to weep with joy when he is pardoned, and to live to the honour of the Redeemer by whose blood he is cleansed."

His momentous "discovery," decisive for his theology to the very end, was that he now knew the "Great Substitute." "I looked to Jesus as I was, and found in Him my Saviour. Thus had the eternal purpose of Jehovah decreed it . . . I looked and

lived . . . I beheld my sin punished upon the Great Substitute, and put away for ever. . . . My Master, the marvel is that Thou shouldest have suffered all this for me!" That is not to be construed as non-ethical theology. To say so is to declare that one is but a pedant. It was Spurgeon's life. He lived at a *depth* many have not even seen, still less experienced. "He said, 'Come,' and I flew to Him, and I clasped Him, and when He let me go again I wondered where my burden was. It was gone! There in the sepulchre it lay, and I felt light as air . . . I, a lad, had found the Lord of Glory! . . . One day of pardoned sin was a sufficient recompense for the whole five years of conviction." Five years of soul-agony banished in the ecstasy of a moment! Hitherto he had heard preachers as one who had not heard, for now it was as though he had never heard the Gospel before. He had inherited its theology as something apart from him; now he entered into its life, and knew it from within—and it was thrilling in the extreme.

As is well known, his theology was Biblical. He was a master of the Book, and it answered all his demand, and it shaped and inspired all his preaching. He listened in to it as we listen in to the wireless, and only when the voice came clear through did he venture to preach. It was as though his continual prayer was, "If Thou goest not with me, carry me not up hence."

II. THE MESSAGE

He inherited it, he experienced it, thereafter he preached it as a man so driven by his passion for his Redeemer that he could do no other. He shared with the prophets of Israel "the burden of the Lord," though he saw with wide-open eyes the glory after which they had strained but had not seen, and the greater the pressure the more thrilling the inspiration, with amazing conversions under its preaching.

Preached it! That is the crucial test of any theology—is it preachable so as to win men and women for God? No one of any Christian experience will mistake the distance between a theology argued out in an academic class-room and the evangel passionately proclaimed by such a preacher as Spurgeon. It is one thing to be, as it were, on a balcony at ease overlooking the drama being enacted on the streets of life, and another to be engulfed in that life and deadly struggle, with destiny as final outcome. Spurgeon was a master-theologian, and let those who doubt it take down the first volume of the New Park Street Pulpit, and on reading the sermons there recall that these were preached by a lad of 19 and 20 years of age. When the most of students are fledglings, hardly able to dare flight, Spurgeon was as an imperious eagle, at home at all heights, since it was his native air. He laid both the Old and New Testaments under service. Thus a major commentary, in all probability, could be made by skilful and daring and reverent selections from his sermons. The earliest and the latest work could be equally used, since in a marvellous

degree, while he mellowed as he grew older, there was never a major re-adjustment he was compelled to make to square with his final thinking. His earliest sermons reveal him to have been then a ripe theologian, master of a great system of thought, definite and precise in his teaching.

Not only did he win men for Christ, but he helped to shape some of the ablest theologians in his day and subsequently. James Denney, for instance, had a brilliant career at university and in the divinity hall, and many prophesied great things concerning him, yet he would never have written such a classic as his *Death of Christ* had not Spurgeon profoundly influenced him. Like him, others of Scotland's famous sons sat at his feet. The late H. R. Mackintosh, to whose works we are all deeply indebted, confessed to the present writer that he had been brought up at home in the Highlands on these sermons. Others of the Faculty of Divinity of Edinburgh University spoke similarly. Spurgeon was no alien to Scotland; her fine people took him "far ben."

It is hard to summarise his theology briefly, but perhaps three terms may set it forth in outline—Theology, Christology and Eschatology.

Theology : Spurgeon thrilled to the thought of the Sovereignty of God, at the heart of which he saw elective-grace. Election has often had a severe turn given to it, but in his heart it was grace in infinite majesty. It made him the man we know, and it steadied him in the crises of his life. "I steadier step when I recall, that though I slip Thou dost not fall." Hence he was at home in the Old Testament, as though he had been born within Israel.

Christology : Fundamentally, however, his whole theology is Christological. In so doing he did justice, if we might put it that way, to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Spurgeon never confused the Godhead, a further instance of his genius.

His approach to the thorny problem of election was Christological, hence his modification of the severity of that doctrine in his day. To him it was central to God's grace, thus elective-grace would be the better rendering. To him it has mystery, but no terror; it was used by him to comfort rather than to distress sensitive minds. It was not to be used to keep folk from thrusting their soul's need upon God's heart, but rather to invite them to do so with all the boldness stark need could command. His sense of the love of Christ enabled him in his preaching to deliver it from the determinism in it so characteristic of the hyper-Calvinism of his day. His own experience had led him to accept the fact of election, and it kept his heart warm with gratitude.

The darker aspect of election was reprobation, and it was held by not a few. For him it had no appeal, and his whole nature as re-born was against it instinctively. He could not make it square with what he had learned of his Master. He was his touch-stone on all such issues, and where His light did not fall, Spurgeon would not go. That dark shadow, he knew, lay like a blight on many a

sensitive soul; moreover, it shut many a preacher's mouth from declaring the full, free grace of Christ. How characteristic, therefore, was his prayer on one occasion: "Lord, gather in thine elect, then elect some more!" What holy daring, yet how Christological! On the other hand, he made no terms with presumption. Yet in his preaching and letters he went so far as his own daring, yet reverent soul dare go. For instance, to some who doubted their own election, this was what he said: "Have you ever prayed?—Have you a millionth part of a desire to come to Christ?—If so, never be afraid of non-election." When one remembers the trend of theological thought of his early day, that is almost miraculous. Suffice it to say he had learned that from his Master, "The Friend of notorious sinners."

On this high Christological level we must also interpret Spurgeon's insight on the debatable interpretation of the Cross of Christ. To him substitution was the major and only adequate interpretation of that Deed of expiation. "I have always considered with Luther and Calvin," he said, "that the sum and substance of the Gospel lies in that word substitution—Christ standing in the stead of man. . . . Sink or swim I go to Him; other hope I have not. I find it convenient every day to come to Christ as a sinner, as I came at the first. The word that drew my soul—'Look, unto Me'—still rings its clarion note in my ears. There I once found conversion, and there I shall ever find renewal."

Eschatology: If this "Doctrine of the Last Things" be understood simply as Christology in utmost consummation, then we do justice to Spurgeon's handling of this fruitful cause of much division in the Church throughout the ages. To Spurgeon the perseverance of the believer was the persistence of Jesus Christ. Eschatology must be the doctrine of the final victory of the grace of Jesus Christ. This whole task would be the Holy Spirit's programme and purpose. At the end "Christ would deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that He might be all and in all."

Never does Spurgeon's sanity and tolerance shine with clearer light than on his handling of this divisive issue. Throughout he noted the deep reticence of his Master in the word that the Father had reserved the "secret" within His own power. No one therefore, would even hold "the key of all unknown." In that reserve Spurgeon felt content and secure. It was enough for him to know that his Master's supreme "hour" would at length come, and in that patience, without presumption, he did his work. To him plan and diagram and precise time-determination held no lure; not for a moment did he lend out his mind to any of them. To quote him on this point: "I believe all the Bible says of a glorious future, but I cannot pretend to be a maker of charts for all time." He saw that Christ had bidden His Church to watch and wait and work, and such were adequate for him. Archibald

Brown asked a guide whom he met in the middle of the Arizona desert whether, as a Christian, he thought the world was getting better. The reply was memorable and would have delighted Spurgeon. Shading his eyes, as though a sailor on the high seas, he said: "I am looking to see Him coming across the desert one day." He was at work, and his mind was full of his job, but his spirit waked unto watching whether Christ was about to come. Rest and expectancy and a day's work well done—that would have suited Spurgeon.

His death rounded off all his theology and its preaching, and it consummated his inheritance and experience in which it had flowered. They were preparing for his return to the Tabernacle, as he lay dying at Mentone. "But," wrote Fullerton, "others were waiting for him, too, in the unclouded country, and thither he went." Fullerton's tribute is moving: "To me he is master and friend. I have never known nor heard of any other, in my time, so many-sided, so commanding, so simple, so humble, so selfless, so entirely Christ's man. Proudly I stand at the salute!" May we do the same? Perhaps, if, like him, we name Christ, Master, not merely in word, but in truth.

FRED CAWLEY.

OF INTEREST TO YOU

Baptist Advance. Our General Secretary, the incoming President of the B.U., has put a trumpet to his lips, or, shall we say, has set a match to heather ready to be kindled to a blaze. M. E. Aubrey's stirring call, made in person and through the Press, is indeed a word in season: surely he has come into the Kingdom for such a time as this. Baptist Advance inspires all that is best within us but we are glad to record that it is also a case of Baptist Advancing. From all parts of our land reports come, of ministers getting together for prayer and purpose, of Campaigns already held or envisaged, without tarrying for any, and also of definite spiritual results. "Now is the hour to move," writes our leader. "Let us see to it that each man among us is alert to follow the movement of God's spirit. 'Oh, that all might catch the flame, all partake the glorious bliss!'"

Rodley. To senior Rawdonians the world over, the name of this little church near Leeds recalls happy memories of spiritual fellowship and gracious Yorkshire hospitality. They will hear with regret that, owing to serious structural defects, the church building had to be demolished and the site has been sold. The faithful remnant, however, are bravely maintaining the work on the adjoining schoolroom where the church was originally formed. Many prayers will ascend on their behalf. May their lamp keep burning brightly.

His Worship the Mayor. Our attention is called to the fact that, in addition to those named in our last issue who filled the

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING FROM Mr. SEYMOUR J. PRICE
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
BAPTIST MINISTERS' FRATERNAL

My dear Friends,

I wonder what the Apostle Paul would say were he writing a New Year's letter of business greeting in this Mid-Century year to his fellow labourers in the Gospel. Much can be gleaned from his Epistles, so that I can say with confidence that there would be both a very cordial ascription and an equally warm-hearted benediction. It is also possible that his feelings would overcome him as they did in at least one of his Epistles and that he would break off his message in the middle in order to include an extra greeting.

Although we in the Baptist Insurance Company are not worthy to be named with the great Apostle we gladly follow his example, and pray that grace, mercy and peace may abound to you all and your churches in this New Year. May the love of Christ which passeth all understanding be increasingly real to you now and always.

Anything that we can do from our business angle to help you and your churches to carry on the work more effectively and free you from anxiety will most gladly be done. No problem is too small or too large for us to do our best to solve.

An Assessor's Report on the fire claim of a Midland church just to hand will unfortunately present the deacons with a problem. The Assessor says:—

“The sums insured in every instance are totally inadequate. It may well be that the cost of rectifying the *partial* damage to the Sunday School will exceed the sum insured thereon. We have drawn the attention of the treasurer to the position and he appreciates the extent to which the property is under-insured.”

Such a report gives us deep concern, as we realise that even when we have paid the full insured amount our friends in the local Church will be faced with a disappointing problem which could so easily have been avoided.

I hope that your deacons have seen to the adjustment of the Insurances of your Church.

With the best of greetings,

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

office of Mayor, while in pastoral charge, there should be added the name of A. Fuller Mills. In the year 1919 he was Mayor of Carmarthen and minister of the local English Baptist Church. We therefore inscribe his name on the honours board.

In the next bed. Among the personal items recorded in the October *Fraternal* was the illness of J. W. Walker. In a letter appreciative of this remembrance, Walker said he felt moved to write to the name next on the list—Selwood. This illustration of fellowship in action doubtless gave pleasure to Selwood. It is cheering to the man in the next bed, so to speak, to receive a brotherly word, or a call from across the ward from a fellow patient, and we trust that Walker's thoughtful action will be widely followed. Look through the names recorded under the different items, and send a greeting in the name of the B.M.F.

Abundant Life. Such is the title of "A Monthly Publication Concerning Personal and Corporate Christian Life"—a four-page leaflet suitable as an inset for a Church Magazine of the same size as the *Fraternal*, or for general distribution. In the three issues before us, Graham Swift writes on "A Habitation of God"; Stephen Winward on "Together"; and Stanley Voke on "The Baptism of the Spirit." Each sounds a deep spiritual note and one that cannot but be helpful to church members and others. We pray God's blessing on our fellow B.M.F. members in this work of Baptist Advance. Stanley Voke, the Vestry, Bethesda Chapel, Sunderland, will send specimens to applicants.

The Magazine.—We readily comply with the request that our January Magazine should centre around the memory of Spurgeon. At short notice F. Cawley and J. R. Edwards have produced the issue, and to them and to each contributor we tender sincere thanks. We appreciate the courtesy of E. C. Rust, of Rawdon, in allowing us to hold over the excellent material he had gathered under the general title of "Biblical Theology." These articles will be published in April.

Can You oblige?—A. J. Barnard, 58, Southam Road, Birmingham, 28, desires a set of the New Park Street Pulpit and the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. Can any brother help him in his quest?

Hospital Chaplaincy.—Under the new Health Act, Free Church Chaplains now serve in nearly every hospital. As the number appointed is in ratio to the number of Free Church patients, it is most desirable that upon entry, the name of the Denomination should be given—and this applies to staff as well as to patients. Here, as in the Forces, it is often the custom of officials to classify as C. of E. all who do not describe themselves otherwise. Our ministers everywhere have a direct responsibility to assist in this matter.

Their Course Completed.—In the death of John Daniel the K. and S. Association loses a well-loved leader. Entering the ministry from the teaching profession in 1910, he served in four

churches in Kent, with great devotion. He was for long Minute Secretary of the Association; he became Moderator in 1931. We join with many in thanking God for His faithful servant.

Samuel Collis, who died at the age of 55, began his ministry at Wirksworth in 1923. After pastorates in Hanley and Westmorland he went to Hebden Bridge, where for eleven years he exercised a helpful ministry, exerting widespread influence in spite of the handicap of prolonged illness. He was an earnest evangelical preacher, and an assiduous pastor, and was greatly respected.

Ministerial Changes.—Charles Bullock, Sidcup; S. G. Bush, Chippenham; B. H. Carpenter, Jersey; William Clark, Exmouth; L. P. Cook, Cirencester; S. V. Cook, Carleton Rode; E. Exall, Melton Mowbray; F. J. Gay, Sutton-in-Ashfield; J. R. Gartry, Waltham Abbey; A. Gray, Nuneaton; G. W. Haden, Falmouth; W. H. Hercock, Wednesbury; G. W. Hughes, Huddersfield; R. Hunt, Edinburgh; T. J. Hamer, Nottingham; F. R. Jewry, Launceston; R. P. Jones, Birmingham; W. A. Kirby, Crewkerne; A. B. Light, Banbury; E. W. Mills, Teignmouth; D. J. Morgan, Darwen; A. E. Paterson, Henley-on-Thames; J. Walmsley, Melbourne, Derby.

The following, having completed their College training, are proceeding to pastorates: P. R. Goodchild (Rawdon), Ramsgate; T. J. Neal (Rawdon), Daybrook; C. W. Steer (Spurgeon's), Walthamstow.

A. A. Blacklidge, having resigned his pastorate at Chesterfield, has been appointed Secretary, E.M.B.A.

Illness.—We send assurance of loving sympathy to friends laid aside: A. Collie, R. A. J. Cusden, J. I. Hasler and B. F. Savill.

We gladly report that A. J. Betteridge has recovered from a severe operation and that Godfrey Miller is able to resume light duty after his long illness consequent upon his sufferings as a Prisoner of War.

G. E. Southgate and E. R. Tribbeck have had anxiety in the home; in each case the wife having been laid aside.

In the death of his loved partner in life W. H. Blunt has suffered grievous loss. May God bless all these friends, is our united prayer.

Darby and Joan.—A member, apologising for absence from a ministerial gathering, adds a revealing paragraph, which we quote: "My aged mother lives with us and has done so for a long time: of late years it has meant that my wife and I cannot go out for a day together: this week, however, an opportunity presents itself." We recall another instance where it has not been possible for a minister to leave his home for a single night for a long period, owing to the need of constant attendance upon a father helplessly ill. It is good to know of the provision of Homes where Darby or Joan or both can be lovingly tended in Christian

surroundings. The need greatly increases, and we hope that in many more centres our Baptist folk—and others—will seek to establish such Homes.

Retirements.—A. J. Billings (1907) closes his notable ministry at Camberwell; E. P. Blackaby (1913) is now residing in Herne Bay; John MacBeath (1907) returns to his native land and will reside in Edinburgh; G. W. Nash (1915) has resigned, partly owing to ill-health; R. J. Smithson (1911), while resigning the active pastorate, will continue his valuable service as Editor of the *Scottish Baptist*. D. Montgomery (1946) is now seeking a business appointment.

College Appointments.—Important changes are announced in connection with our Colleges. At Spurgeon's, Principal P. W. Evans, and at Glasgow, Principal Holms Coats, retire from office. These honoured brethren receive the thanks of us all, not only for their influence over their own students, but for their outstanding service in the Denominational and wider religious life of England and Scotland. The vacant positions will be filled by Dr. Cawley at Spurgeon's and Dr. A. B. Miller at Glasgow. Tutorial service in these Colleges will be rendered by G. R. Beasley-Murray and R. Guy Ramsay. At Manchester, Kenneth Dykes has entered upon his duties as Principal. We wish every blessing to these brethren in their responsible work, and we also congratulate Dr. Dakin on his twenty-five years as President at Bristol.

The Library.—The Librarian, A. J. Westlake, wishes to say that he receives regularly from a member such excellent journals as *The Muslim World*, *Philosophy*, *The Evangelical Review*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, *Review of Religion*: they will be sent to any man making application.

Also, we are continuing through 1950 the circulation of *The Congregational Quarterly*, *Ecumenical Review*, *International Review of Missions*, and *Scottish Journal of Theology*. Members who wish their names added to the rota, please write.

Unless local librarians hear to the contrary, all boxes should be sent to Kingsbridge by 20th January for examination and renewal.

THE WIDER CIRCLE

SOUTH AFRICA

In his latest report of the Evangelistic Crusade under the auspices of the S.A. Baptist Union, Ivor Powell tells the following incident: "One of the high-lights of the Crusade was the attendance of the Governor-General and Mrs. Van Zyl at a Sunday morning service, at Pretoria. I was tempted to alter my ways and conform to the 'State Occasion,' but resisting the idea I preached a straight-forward Gospel sermon. A few days later a letter came from Government House expressing the delight

THE BAPTIST HOME WORK FUND

The Editorial Board have kindly given this page so that I might write something about the Fund, and the offering on 12th March. Let me therefore emphasise :

1. That the Fund has no meaning apart from the Home Work Scheme. I hope therefore, that all ministers have made themselves acquainted with the scheme, which appeared in full in the Council's report to the Assembly of 1947. Especially should be noted the object of the scheme, which is to make the Union, Associations and Churches as efficient as possible for their great evangelical task in this, our homeland. To me, this resolves itself into two parts. One is to present Christ by all means within our reach to as many people as we can through all our agencies and organisations. And the other is to help win this homeland for Christ.
2. Give the facts to our people. As usual, articles will appear in the *Baptist Times* in the weeks preceding 12th March, and the "Green Book" with new illustrations, will be sent to all ministers. These will give the facts. As I go up and down the country I have been a little surprised to find how little our people seem to know. It may be, of course, that they have been told, but have not understood. The facts need to be told with imagination and, if I may say so, with the human touch. Some churches do very well, some not so well. We realise that in many places there are great burdens that must be carried, but there are quite a number of Associations whose contribution is under three half-pence per member per month.
3. The Fund should appeal to all our organisations, for a considerable sum is given annually for the administration of the Women's Department, the Young People's Department, the work of the Moral and Social Questions Committee, the Lay Preachers' Federation. It is not asking too much to desire that we lay before all our organisations the claim of the Fund.
4. The more we receive, the more we can distribute. We have yet a long way to go, especially in the matter of the Ministerial Stipends and the grants to the retired ministers and to widows.

I thank you for all the help you have given in past years and I rely upon you again for this new year.

B. GREY GRIFFITH.

of H.E. and his wife at hearing once more the grand old Gospel. Surely South Africa is to be congratulated on such gracious people in high office." May blessing continue upon the Crusade. Our S.A. members will be interested to know that J. R. Gartry has accepted a hearty and unanimous invitation to the pastorate of Waltham Abbey Church, London.

CANADA

We are glad to report the accession of several new members, introduced by Keith Hobson and Victor Smith. These include the President of the Canadian Baptist Federation—M. F. McCutcheon. We commend our fellow member, G. E. Simpson, who is taking up a pastorate at Long Island, Nova Scotia.

AUSTRALIA

Editorial Changes.—G. H. Blackburn has become the Editor of the *Victorian Baptist* and N. R. Wood that of the *New Zealand Baptist*. In both journals there are attractive illustrations and helpful articles: the format reflects much credit. Our own Editorial Board begs to offer sincere congratulations.

E. C. Smith, our Tasmanian Correspondent, was recently inducted President of the B.U. of Tasmania.

S. E. Hawkes, late R.A.A.F., has been appointed to take charge of British and Foreign Bible Society work in South Australia.

S. J. M. Holly, our South Australian Correspondent, was a special speaker at the N.S.W. Assembly, and preached the Union Sermon.

Wesley J. Bligh (Dr. Boreham's successor at Armadale and Victorian B.U. Immigration Officer) visited Britain for several weeks and returned to Australia as Free Church Chaplain on an all-migrant ship. The Australian Government has made provision for three chaplains—Free Church, C. of E. and R.C.—to travel with emigrants travelling to Australia. We hope to welcome W. Probert Phillips, the Federal B.U. Immigration Officer, early in 1950.

Gospel Waggon or Mobile Units are doing excellent work in N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland, in areas developed by the Government. J. W. Fletcher, now in charge of the Queensland Gospel Waggon, for example, has visited isolated towns, finding out if there was a hall available, booking it, visiting every home and giving a personal invitation, making all the arrangements single-handed, praying alone for God's blessing. Such work takes a tremendous toll on one's physical and spiritual resources; our prayers ascend on behalf of this intrepid and devoted servant of God.

We bespeak a welcome for two of our members who will shortly be going to Australia. S. H. Price, of Grimsby, has accepted a pastorate at Perth, West Australia, and H. Meadows, of Bishop Auckland, goes to Victoria. We wish them every blessing in the work upon which they are about to enter.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Claims of the Free Churches. By Henry Townsend.
(Hodder & Stoughton; 15s.)

The four hundred words allotted me by the Editors are all too few in which to notice this substantial book of three hundred pages, which may be regarded as the religious and political testament of one of the most doughty Free Churchmen of his generation. Dr. Townsend's volume is intended as a companion and reply to the Archbishop of York's book, *The Claims of the Church of England*. He sets himself to relate the "claims of the Free Churches upon the gratitude of the British nation," and does so, in the main, by a detailed historical survey of the religious and political controversies of the last three hundred years. He recalls "battles long ago," but too many have forgotten, if they ever knew, that they were battles, won by toil and sweat and tears. As will be expected by those who know the author, the writing is fearless, trenchant and hard-hitting. It is a powerful indictment which is built up against the Anglican Church (and particularly its bishops) and the Tory Party for their reluctant granting of religious freedom and their frequent opposition to social reform. Dr. Townsend's great-grandfather was a Chartist. He says that he owes more to R. W. Dale than to any other Free Church thinker. He writes in almost nostalgic terms of the latter half of the nineteenth century as "the golden age of Nonconformity." It is just at this point that some doubts arise as to whether the struggle has always been quite so definitely between whites and blacks as Dr. Townsend suggests. Is the division and decline of the Liberal party simply "one of the inexplicable accidents of English history"? Can one just dismiss "the problem that democracy has dropped the spiritual pilot"? During Dr. Townsend's lifetime the Free Churches and the Anglican Church in Manchester—and elsewhere—have almost completely reversed their roles, so far as spiritual vitality and leadership are concerned. This is the situation to which we have now to address ourselves, and we hope that Dr. Townsend will give us a sequel to this book and tell those of us of a younger generation how he thinks that, through the Free Churches, the claims of the Gospel may be effectively presented to twentieth century England and what this will involve in ecclesiastical relationships. Apparently Dr. Townsend would not now agitate for Disestablishment. He rejects Dr. Garbett's suggestions, but hopes that the request will come from within the Anglican Church. After that, what? We hope that this book will be widely discussed by our ministers. If it is read by Anglicans, they will understand us better. It is a pity the publishers have let at least a score of printers' errors go uncorrected.

E. A. PAYNE.

The Sayings of Jesus. By T. W. Manson. (S.C.M. Press; 352 pp.; 21s.)

This book is a re-print of Part II of "The Mission and Message of Jesus," a commentary on the Gospels edited by Dr. H. D. A. Major and issued in 1937. The original work has long been unobtainable. In default of re-publication of the whole commentary, the S.C.M. Press has earned the gratitude of the theological world for issuing Dr. Manson's exposition of the teaching of Jesus.

The teaching of our Lord as given in Mark is omitted from this book (the author has already dealt with it in his earlier work, "The Teaching of Jesus"). Here we are provided with an exposition of the teaching common to Matthew and Luke (the document Q), followed by that peculiar to Matthew (M) and that found only in Luke (L). By this means the distinctive contribution of each branch of the primitive tradition is clearly set forth.

Dr. Manson is unusually well-qualified for his task: he has an extraordinary knowledge of Judaistic thought, both of the inter-testamental period and of the later Rabbinical literature, a robust theological outlook expressed with conviction, and withal a sense of humour and shrewd judgment of human nature. One sometimes feels that the Gospels suffer at the hands of their exegetes: there is a tendency to treat the various books as though one were dissecting a corpse, and the resultant savour is somewhat like that of Lazarus on the fourth day. There is nothing of this about Dr. Manson. At times his exposition scintillates with brilliance, sometimes it is frankly challenging, always it is thoughtful, so that one can learn something fresh about the Lord's teaching on almost every page.

The opening paragraph of the book sets the Teaching in what is to the author its true position—in subordination to the Kerygma. "Historic Christianity," he writes, "is first and foremost a Gospel, the proclamation to the world of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. For the primitive Church, the central thing is the Cross on the Hill rather than the Sermon on the Mount . . . What is preached in the first instance is something that God has done for man in Christ. Only when this has been appropriated does the question arise how we are to think of the God who has done this great thing, or how we are now to order our lives as Christians." Not that there should be a rigid division between the two aspects of our Lord's ministry: "The life and work of Jesus, His teaching, the mission of the disciples, the Cross and Resurrection, are all of a piece. For Jesus the teaching is an essential part of His life-work, but it is not the whole. The whole is the manifestation of the Kingdom of God as a present reality. Origen was right when he called Jesus *autobasileia*—the Kingdom itself" (p. 344).

Dr. Manson does not believe that Jesus was "uneducated": "It is probable that He knew the Old Testament in Hebrew and,

I think, possible at least that He was acquainted with the Rabbinic Hebrew used in the schools of the Law . . . The impression left by the accounts of His dealings with these men is not that they saw in Him a village craftsman turned amateur theologian but rather a competent scholar who had developed heretical tendencies" (p. 11). As to the sources of the Teaching, although the largest part of the tradition must be credited to the disciples we are not to forget the "common people who heard Him gladly": "In the second quarter of the first century there must have been literally thousands of people in Judaea and Galilee who had at one time or another seen Jesus, and could tell some story about Him or repeat some saying of His" (p. 12). In the earlier years of the primitive Church, therefore, "the tradition concerning the teaching of Jesus rested on a broader basis than we commonly imagine."

It is impossible to give much idea, in the limits of a review, of Dr. Manson's style of exposition, but the following remarks on the Mary and Martha episode are typical: "It could be urged, and Martha makes the point, that in leaving all, Mary has mostly left her duties in the house. A similar criticism could, however, have been made by Peter's wife or the father of James and John; and it could be said that the progress of the Gospel in the world would not have been what it was if there had not been those who heard a call that cancelled all other obligations. As the story stands Mary belongs to those who take the Kingdom by storm, who put their hand to the plough and do not look back, who leave the dead to bury their dead" (p. 265). The comment on the Pharisee and Publican is noteworthy: "It is a great mistake to regard the publican as a decent sort of fellow, who knew his own limitations and did not pretend to be better than he was. It is one of the marks of our time that the Pharisee and the publican have changed places; it is the modern equivalent of the publican who may be heard thanking God that he is not like those canting humbugs, hypocrites and killjoys, whose chief offence is that they take their religion seriously. This publican was a rotter; and he knew it. He asked for God's mercy because mercy was the only thing he dared ask for" (p. 312).

The strong language of these last remarks is on a par with much else in this book, wherein Dr. Manson reveals a deep sympathy for the Pharisees. He feels that they have been wronged by the Church and he finds it hard to forgive the Palestinian community, responsible for drawing up "M," for what he believes to be misrepresentations of the Pharisees and of our Lord's dealings with them. One gathers that our esteemed author would like to adapt an oracle in Ecclesiasticus, quoted by him, and affirm:—

For two traditions doth my soul feel abhorrence,
Yea, and for a third which is a thing of nought:
The works and words of the Baptist and "M,"
And a Son of Man that is not collective!

With due apologies to Ben Sira (and to Dr. Manson) for such skittishness, one nevertheless demurs at the contention that the Temptation story represents the considered refusal by our Lord of the conception of Messiahship preached by John the Baptist and that the eschatology of "M" is an adulteration of the teaching of Jesus by that of John. Dr. Manson's suspicion of the theology of "M" leads him to some curious conclusions: Matt. vii, 21-23; x, 23; xxii, 11 are all regarded as anti-Pauline; the man without a wedding garment is either Judas or Paul; 1 Cor. x, 4 ("That rock was Christ") is directed against the teaching of Palestinian Christians that Peter was the rock of the Church; Matt. xxiv, 12 ("Because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold") is the Jewish-Christian view of Pauline Christianity. The shade of Baur lurks about many a page of this exposition of Matthew.

One feels dubious about this tendency to extol the Pharisees and pillory the Church of Jerusalem. One would like to query whether the later Rabbinical literature really does represent the viewpoint of the typical Pharisee of our Lord's day; as long ago as 1920 Professor Dodd asked the same question and concluded that the strain of Pharisaic piety represented in the Rabbinical writings was overwhelmed by the strength of the exclusive party in the New Testament period, and that the Pharisaism of the Gospel era was predominantly puritanical (see "The Meaning of Paul for To-day," pp. 9-11). The question is perhaps not of urgent importance, except that it is part of an almost universally accepted policy of debunking the Jerusalem tradition, both in regard to its teaching on the Law in relation to the Gospel and its presentation of eschatology. Instead of pitting Matt. v, 17 against Mark vii, 1-9, surely it is more reasonable to hold that our Lord held in one both viewpoints, as Bossuet and McNeile both maintained. Paul found it no impossible feat to reconcile the view that the Parousia would be sudden yet preceded by premonitory signs; the contrast of the Q apocalypse (Luke xvii) and Mark xiii is fully present in 1 Thess. iv as compared with 1 Thess. v; one fails to see why Matthew is to be damned because he preserves the latter viewpoint or Luke pitied because he has both.

In entering this caveat one is conscious that one is criticising a current trend of New Testament criticism rather than Dr. Manson, yet as Dr. Manson himself cheerfully faces the theological world alone in his view of Gospel Christology perhaps we may not be downhearted either! His expositions will repay close study and deserve it. It is greatly to be desired that ministers will somehow procure this book; they'll be the richer for doing so, even if their pockets won't.

G. R. BEASLEY-MURRAY.

THE
B.M.S. FIELD STAFF
of
“Foreign” Missionaries
and
“National” Evangelists
invite the
SPIRITUAL CO-OPERATION
of
THEIR MINISTERIAL
COLLEAGUES IN BRITAIN

“He is my partner and fellow-helper”—2 Corinthians viii, 23

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
93 Gloucester Place
London, W.1

Bible Lessons Handbooks—Junior and Primary Grades (Second Year). Edited by Bertha C. Krall. 224 pp. (Carey-Kingsgate Press; 6s. each net.)

In response to a widespread demand for more Bible lessons for Sunday Schools, the British Lessons Council is bringing out a series of graded lessons based entirely on the Bible. They will be warmly welcomed. The lessons are undated, unlike the Standard Graded Courses, but they follow the familiar pattern of "Notes on the Lesson" (for the teacher), "Lesson Outline" and "Activities."

Yet somehow one has the impression that the point is being missed. No clear message or call for response emerges from these lessons. They impart information. That is their strength and weakness. They call for no verdict. Rarely do they seem to drive the "lesson" home. No one asks for moralising in the old-fashioned way. But are we wrong in suggesting that a Sunday School lesson should do something more than impart information? If it is intended that the teacher should present the material in such a way that the lesson is driven home and the verdict called forth, then it would have been better had some indication been given as to how it should be done. Many teachers will give these lessons as information. If they do, the children will go home knowing more but feeling the same.

Heroes of the Way—Junior Lessons, Volume Four. (Religious Education Press; 5s. net.)

Stories of Elijah, Elisha, our Lord, St. Paul and the Patron Saints and modern missionaries. Illustrated with sketches and maps.

W. W. BOTTOMS.

Norwood Papers. Contributions to Christian thought by former students of Spurgeon's College.

No. 1. *Religious History and Eschatology*, by G. Beasley-Murray, M.Th. 12 pp.

This is a useful contribution to a subject which has for too long been a Cinderella of Christian thought, but which is now beginning to receive the attention of those who are trying to see the relevance of Christianity in the present age. It is therefore timely to have this pamphlet from one who is making a special and careful study of the subject.

The author deals with four "fundamental postulates of the eschatological view of history." In the first, that history is moving to a God-ordained climax, he links the Day of the Lord in the teaching of the Old Testament prophets with the teaching of our Lord concerning the Kingdom coming in power. He argues that His

sayings about the Last Things deserve to be received as seriously as the other sayings about the Kingdom, some of which an earlier generation treated with scepticism but to which modern Gospel criticism is now prepared "to attach a large degree of authenticity."

The second postulate is that the Climax of History is uniformly viewed as near. Here the author attacks those who (a) fail to see that the prophetic writers of Israel inevitably portrayed the end of history in the context of their own lives and (b) insist that the ancient kingdoms must be revived for the sake of being destroyed again, so achieving a literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

In the third postulate, that the Climax of the Ages has already entered upon the sphere of History, the writer describes the work of Christ as bringing the Kingdom to actuality within history, an event which points to the consummation of the Kingdom, namely the Second Coming of Christ. Here his argument needs longer treatment and his terms more careful definition.

The final postulate is that the Assurance of the Consummation of the Kingdom at the Second Coming is based on the fact and method of its coming already within History.

Our main criticism is that the author appears to have given too little thought to the relation of time to eternity and to the eternal significance of historic fact. It is this which makes the fourth section so unsatisfying. But the pamphlet deserves careful study and will make an admirable starting point for discussions in ministers' fraternals as well as for individual thinking on the subject.

No. 2. *Communism, Christianity and History*, by G. J. M. Pearce, M.A. 10 pp.

The author begins with a brief account of the philosophy of Karl Marx and shows that it is a particular application of the philosophy of Hegel, but with a twist in the tail, the tail in this case being Marx's attack on religion, which in his view acts as a prop to the thesis of capitalism which in turn will yield place to the final and perfect class-less society.

From that beginning the writer gives much space to prove that "certain elements in Marxism are strongly akin to Christian beliefs." He cites, belief in a sovereign power, the problem of freedom, and eschatology. He is obviously trying to be fair and see what good there may be in the Marxists. So much so that at the end of this section the reader is tempted to say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Marxist."

Where we should have expected to have the weaknesses of the Marxist philosophy exposed by argument, however, we are met with dogmatic statement. The real weaknesses and failures of dialectical materialism and its resultant form of society are not dealt with at sufficient length or depth. The result is that the

pamphlet as a whole is disproportionate. This is a pity, since it would appear that the author could have had two more pages in which to present more completely the Christian argument and a criticism of what is the most serious rival to the faith to-day.

This is not to say that the pamphlet is not welcomed. It is; and we shall look forward to the further contributions from former "Spurgeon's men" and hope that they will keep up the standard that has been set.

W. W. BOTTOMS.

SECRETARIAL NOTES

The Baptist Theological Seminary, which has been established by our American brethren at Ruschlikon-Zurich, Switzerland, is anxious to provide short courses of about ten days for youth leaders and ministers from Britain. Our friends there are prepared to cut the actual cost of it to the barest minimum. Will any of our interested readers please write to Dr. J. D. Franks at the College for fuller information.

The members of the B.M.F. will be glad to know that the Secretary of the Baptist Union, the Rev. M. E. Aubrey, will give the address at the Annual Meeting at Bloomsbury on Wednesday, 3rd May. He will speak on "Baptist Advance."

New nominations for the General Committee of the B.M.F. should be sent to me at 21, Arncliffe Road, Far Headingley, Leeds 6, by 31st March, 1950. Each Area is allowed two representatives, with the exception of Wales (English and Welsh Speaking), which is entitled to six. The present representatives are as follows:—

North-Western: H. L. Watson (Manchester), R. Darvill (Blackpool). North-Eastern: M. McLachlan, M.A. (South Shields), A. N. Wilson, B.A., B.D. (Leeds). East-Midland: A. S. Arnold, B.A., B.D. (Hucknall), R. W. Thomson (Loughborough). West-Midland: J. Hair (Chalford, Stroud). Western: W. G. E. Thorne (Paulton). Scotland: J. D. Jamieson, M.A. (Glasgow), Jas. Scott, M.A., Ph.D. (Glasgow). Eastern: T. W. Gill (Cambridge), T. W. Shepherd (Southchurch). Central: C. J. Nelson (Cambersley), R. C. Rowsell (Kettering). Southern: J. Tweedley (Winchester), H. W. Janisch, M.A. (Worthing). Metropolitan: L. J. Howells, B.A. (New Southgate), Angus McMillan, M.A. (Streatham). Wales (English and Welsh speaking): W. George Evans, B.A., B.D. (Whitchurch), E. W. Price Evans, M.A. (Pontypool), Alwyn Griffiths, B.A., B.D. (Swansea), J. Lewis (Wrexham), I. Vaughan Morris, B.A. (Old Colwyn), H. Nicholas (Newport).

J.O.B.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, PLEASE

Subscriptions for 1950 are now due. Members everywhere are earnestly requested to pay the Correspondent of the local Fraternal at the January meeting or remit—3s. 6d.—direct to our Treasurer: W. Charles Johnson, 17, Bethell Avenue, Ilford. While the majority of our brethren are very conscientious in this matter, yet in October we had to send more than 300 reminders and a second reminder in December to more than 100. *Verb. sap.*

 ADDENDA

Good wishes to W. J. Bradnock on his appointment as Translation Secretary to the Bible Society. He follows in a great succession! Other changes of pastorate are recorded, and we wish our brethren every blessing: J. A. Caldwell, Calne; G. S. Tydeman, Oakham; F. Whitaker, Somersham; J. Williams, Cinderford; D. S. Jamieson, Wallasey; R. C. Macrobie, Peterhead; J. S. Swanson, Cupar.

We greatly regret to hear of the illness befallen E. F. M. Vokes which has made necessary a serious operation.

We send our sympathy also to A. B. Kinsey, A. S. Langley and B. Savill in their continued illness. We also remember prayerfully S. G. Woollard and Frank Fells in their time of sore bereavement.

We salute the memory of David Morgan and A. H. Sutherland and thank God for their long and useful ministry.

 FROM THE LIBRARIAN

For sale: "Apocalypse of John." H. B. Swete.

Offers to A. J. Westlake, Kingsbridge.

We are considering issuing the Spurgeon articles in booklet form for general circulation.

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